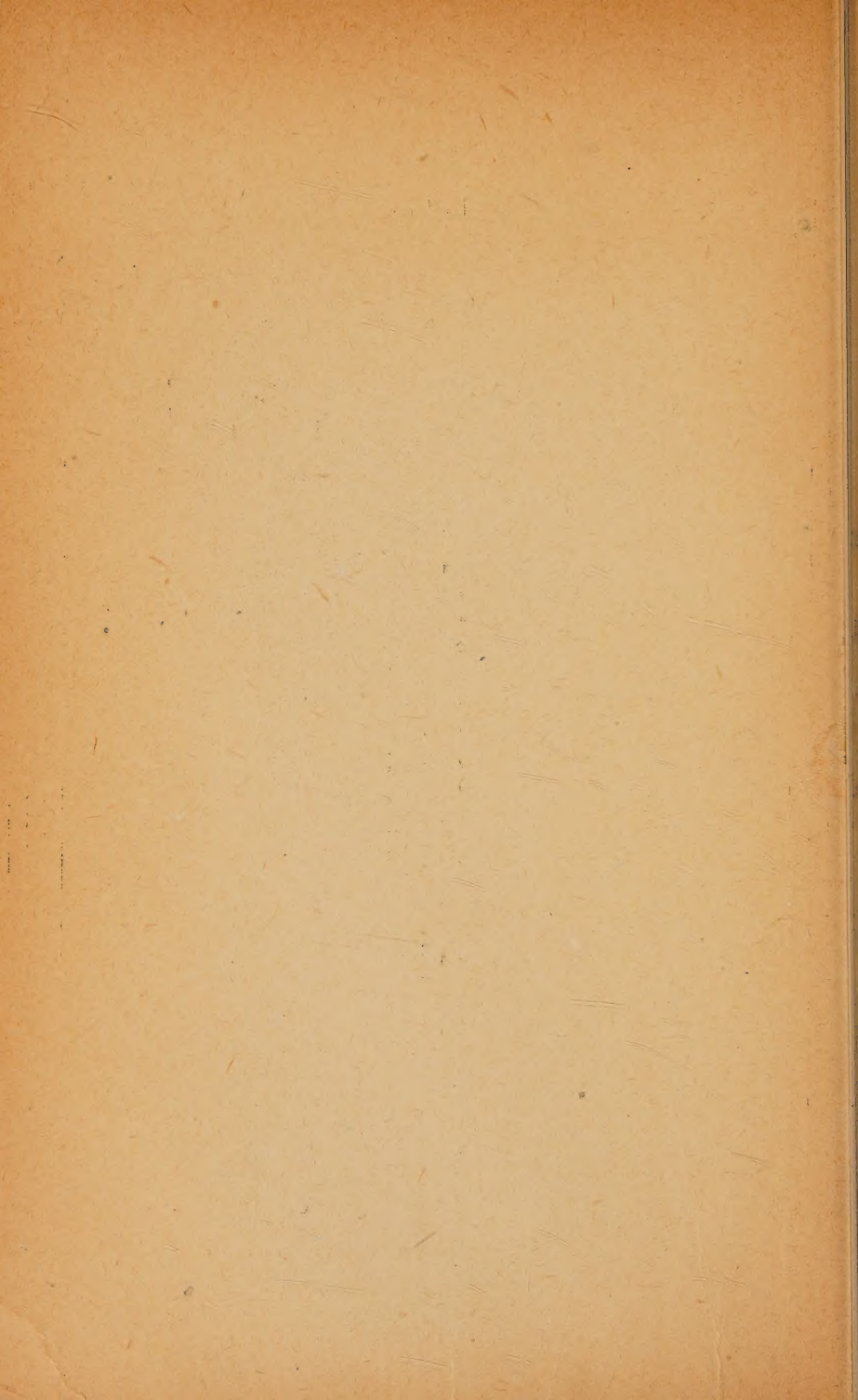


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Edited by
RALPH HILL

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THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

RALPH HILL



I WAS recently asked by the Editor of *The Music Teacher* if I would contribute to a symposium entitled, "My Ideal Piano Examination." I have always considered the examination system as prosecuted in Britain to be a worthless and iniquitous institution. My contribution to the symposium was therefore as follows:

"I suppose you mean *official* examinations as decreed by our bureaucratic Educational Authorities? In my humble opinion most examinations in piano-playing are as worthless and as innocuous as most patent medicines. There should be only one *official* examination—a very stiff final for a professional diploma—and general musical culture should be as important a subject for examination as the actual playing of an instrument. As for amateurs, it should be illegal to persecute them with examinations on any branch of any art. Non-professional pianists should be encouraged to love and appreciate music as they are supposed to be encouraged to love God and their parents! If our bureaucratic Educational Authorities must have an examination for amateur pianists then it should be concerned with two things only: general musical culture and, above all, sight reading. To read with facility (especially from a full score) is far more important than the acquisition of the finer academic points of piano technique."

As I have suggested above, I would do away with all examinations in the arts. None of the arts should be *taught* as a *subject*. They should all be treated like sports. Although indulgence in sport has an important part in the development of healthy youth, football and cricket are not taught as subjects and then subjected to examination. The whole point is that the development of the

æsthetic sense is as important as the development of physical well-being, and both are a necessary background to the assimilation of the facts of history, geography, science, mathematics, and languages, which form the basis for a higher and more specialised technical education. That music or poetry should be treated like mathematics is horrifying to contemplate.

A copy of George Sampson's *Seven Essays* (Cambridge University Press) came to me the other day, and I read with great joy his autobiographical chapter, "A Boy and His Books." In it he tells how as a weakly boy he discovered literature, and when he was strong enough to attend his first school he spent three happy years there in a free-and-easy but most stimulating atmosphere. Then, at the age of fifteen and a half, his happy schooldays were abruptly cut short and he found himself at a new school, and his new life "appeared to be dominated by perpetual examinations, weekly, monthly, yearly. . . . My life seemed to have suddenly turned grey. I had passed into an intellectual atmosphere which was dull and depressing. Gone were the times of happy adventure and discoveries for their own sakes. The phantom of eternal examination brooded over the place. As examinations had to be passed, we spent our time in being examined so that we should be ready for examination. Whether this state of things is common in all schools that take examinations seriously I do not know. What I do know is that it is the worst possible way of preparing for examinations. Pupils are made dull and apathetic instead of being kept intellectually alive. It fell to my lot in later years to prepare adult students for examinations, and our method was to forget all about examinations and to take our work as a pleasure. The pupils were kept interested—and they passed their examinations. In my new school, where nothing was done unless it 'paid' for examination purposes, I did not prosper until I began to rebel and go my own way."

This is a picture of the conditions in a school over half a century ago. It is equally true of many (perhaps most) schools to-day, particularly so far as music is concerned. The teaching of music is largely in the hands of musicians with examination mania. Their own knowledge and experience of music is largely confined

to the necessities of and for cut-and-dried examinations. Their artistic background is nil.

"For the first time I began to receive lessons in English. But as 'English' meant the humbug of parsing, analysis, and paraphrase, it was useless to me," says Mr. Sampson. Substitute Music for English and we find the same kind of useless humbug masquerading as "lessons" in music.

Let us do away with all this mechanical and unimaginative "teaching" of music. Specialised technical training should be given only to the intending professional musician and to the gifted amateur, who has the time and urge to attain a professional standard.

What is so vital is that every young person leaving school or university should have been encouraged during his educative years to develop his æsthetic sense so that he can go through his life as a clerk, engineer, farmer, doctor, baker, or draper with a rich background of fine literature and music. He should have been given regular opportunities to gain aural experience of the great masterpieces of music. He should have been taught nothing, but carefully guided to assimilate a lot. "Taste not Technique" should be the slogan for the amateur.

The earlier stages of developing the æsthetic sense must be based on emotional response. Every work of art is an emotional experience. In his essay "Truth and Beauty" Mr. Sampson says: "If we do not respond to the emotional experience called Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, that poem means nothing to us; and we may study the life of Shelley, chatter about Harriet, find the derivation and meaning of every word, parse and analyse every sentence, trace every idea to the remotest of sources, and we shall be as far from the poem as ever." That is even more true about a piece of music, whose ideas have no other meaning than that which their sounds give them.

• The tragedy of it all is that owing to the sincere but misdirected efforts of the early musical educationalists, music has at last been accepted as a "subject" by the authorities. Like literature, it now has to be forced through the grinding mills of technical education with results that are the negation of the essential basis of all art.

The ideal system of education would consist of three branches, all of which are essential and complementary: (a) Technical—mathematics, geography, history, language, etc.; (b) Æsthetical—literature, music, painting, architecture; (c) Physical—football, cricket, gymnastics, etc. Each branch should be taught or assimilated according to principles derived from its basic appeal. Thus the basis of mathematics is factual and its process intellectual; the basis of art (appreciation) is emotional and its process æsthetical; the basis of sport is physical and its process is organised play. I am aware that mathematics can have an æsthetic appeal, that art can have an intellectual appeal, and that sport can have both an æsthetic and intellectual appeal, but we must not confuse primary qualities with secondary qualities.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS ON JAZZ

In our second number Rex Harris stated in his article "The Influence of Jazz on English Composers" that Vaughan Williams "spurns" any likelihood of being influenced by jazz in his own works. Vaughan Williams now writes to us that, "it is quite incorrect to say that I 'spurn' jazz. I have a great admiration of the almost uncanny skill of the jazz composers, though I think it is used occasionally for unworthy purposes. As to its influence on my own music, it is not for me to say, but for those who listen to and study my works."

POSTLUDE FOR THE B.B.C.

I am glad that the B.B.C. has seen the error of its autocratic ways and has consequently come to an agreement with the Hallé Orchestra over broadcasting. The Hallé Society is to be congratulated for maintaining a strong line and standing out for justice. There is no doubt that pressure of public opinion eventually forced the hands of the little bureaucrats of Broadcasting House.

AN ENGLISH CRITIC LOOKS AT AMERICAN MUSIC

SCOTT GODDARD



HALF-WAY through the war contemporary American music began to arrive here in quantity enough to make itself felt—that is to say, in sufficient performances to produce an effect. We who had heard of the men writing in America then, the younger men who were said to be forging an American style in serious-minded work, now could hear the music. We made some remarkable discoveries.

The war finished, we looked forward eagerly to more and more rapid commerce in music between the two sides of the Atlantic. Were we really so much interested in our own music getting to the U.S.A.? I guess that the importance of that was not minimised in people's minds; but what counted for more was the opportunity that seemed to be imminent for us here to be able to listen to, to get hold of, and to study contemporary work from America.

We were in for disappointment. Scores certainly were available, but in lamentably short supply and at high prices for our war-weary pockets. Luckily a fresh source came into being, the music library of the U.S. Information Service. This was a great boon; and though we could not buy scores to play over and mark at home we could purchase American help and take up American time in Grosvenor Square. And so our distress was relieved. But there remained and still remains the chief disappointment which has grown big this year: the decrease in performances of contemporary American music here. No one is able to tell me the reason for it. By the time this article appears the Proms, where once we did hear an occasional American work, will have come and gone. It may be that by then the case will have altered and our acquaintance with the latest from the U.S.A. will have ripened

again. As it is, my own knowledge of this music, withered after that short wartime spring, has too little to go on; in fact, little more than some nostalgic memories.

I have written elsewhere of the emotion with which I took to myself what I then felt, and do in fact feel still, to be a peculiarly authoritative and authentic vision in Samuel Barber's *Dover Beach*. Myself profoundly influenced from mere boyhood by the works of Henry James, I had allowed an idea of what James would have called the American Scene to grow upon me. It was an idea based on nothing but supposition and a poetic dream, the vision of a person who has never been to the U.S.A. The importance of America, the significance of American culture, the spirit I imagined in American youth, especially that part of it which came over here to see and be affected by Europe, made me walk the streets of London (and of course the streets of Rye) watching young America and trying to discover traces of Daisy Miller and Chad Newsome. Those were types I longed to meet and talk with, so that I might be in on their European experience, perhaps even become a part of it.

In those adolescent wanderings the thought of music being a part of this American experience of mine never seems to have entered into my calculations. It was at first pure literature and poetry. That I never did meet Daisy or Chad and never was able to get across the Atlantic to see for myself must, I suppose, have drawn me away from the literary approach, which had fostered ideas and no more, and sent me hunting in a sphere where I could move with more confidence, the virgin soil of American music.

There was at first little enough to go on; Macdowell was valueless for anyone in search of young American music. On the other hand, the impact of Barber's setting for baritone and string quartet of Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach* was immediate. With my special background of Henry James's young Americans visiting or living in Europe, what they brought to us, and what they took back with them, it was inevitable that this American vision of the man watching the lights of France from his coign of vantage on the Kent coast should have aroused an answering glimmer. Let it not be thought that I was casting Barber for the

part of American youth, moved, as James's youths had varyingly been, by the appeal of Europe. It is a part I imagine he would not attempt to fill, at least in our day. But the poem, bridging the æons between "Sophocles long ago" and "the world, which seems to lie before us like a land of dreams," came to the ear on music that I knew to be the work of a young American who had himself undergone the European experience. And the result, in this setting, seemed, as I have said, authentic. I then found that I had to be careful with my reactions. Barber's *Dover Beach* was first met with in wartime, that foetid breeding-season of false judgments. And how strong the tides of emotion could run when such lines—

"And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night"

—were set to sensitive music.

I had therefore to find a corrective, if contemporary American music was to become more than the experience of one work met in hazardous times. That corrective I obtained from more of Barber's music, the admirable *Essays* for orchestra, the *Violin Concerto*, all of it music which strengthened pleasure and confirmed that earlier favourable opinion. And about that time another gramophone record (for *Dover Beach* had at first been but that) produced a work by Roy Harris, the arresting and still both delightful and instructive *Third Symphony*. This was instructive because it sounded as though it were farther from tradition than Barber's music. And since it seemed sometimes to utter a stray rhythm here and there, or a form of notes unlike the patterns of other countries' or continents' music, it forced one to imagine that Harris was for that moment as near a true American symphonic idiom as was Copland. In Copland there has always seemed to be something essentially and therefore narrowly American, though it is certainly not only through him that the true American music will at last reach its first maturity. Barber seems to take the great European tradition into account; it is a method that I consider to be in the long run the most fruitful for American music, but hotter bloods are irked by it and turn

to slicker things just as in literature they had turned from Henry James to Hemingway. Harris, on the other hand, seemed in this Third Symphony to be willing to jettison quite a large amount of tradition and to take on board ballast of Middle-West manufacture. Yet not altogether; that he left to Copland.

By the time the record of Harris's symphony had reached us, concert programmes had begun to be starred with American names; and so we hoped the revelation would continue and that we should eventually get together enough information about contemporary creation over there to form some sort of comprehensive judgment. Piston and Schuman gave us much to think about. At length, as I listened to Schuman's music I began to wonder whether this by no means dull nor unattractive dryness, sometimes like two bones trying to strike their lost life out of each other, was not looked upon in the U.S.A. as Rubbra is looked upon here. Each composer seemed to me to possess the same wonderful ability to talk at some length, and fairly forcibly, about matters of palpable interest to themselves. In both cases I have been loath to leave the music to other listeners, since I knew I might thereby miss just such a moment of vision which can come only from precisely that species of ratiocination, and thus be the poorer for a rare experience. Schuman's struck me, as Rubbra's does, as music that exports less well than some.

But the important thing was that we were hearing Schuman, Piston, Barber, Harris, and more. And we thought we were in a good way towards understanding this important matter of contemporary creation in American music. But now the case is altered and we seem in danger of being left with memories and nothing more. What condition the interested American is in with regard to contemporary music from here I have no means at present of telling. But if he is as badly off as we, then he will understand our feeling of frustration. And if an American reader, seeing the few names mentioned here, should say, "But this man doesn't know what he's talking about; why, he has never mentioned —," then I reply that the supply of America's new music is so short that I, having talked about only what I did know, must now stop because the spring has run dry over here.

TIME, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE!

F. BONAVIA



THE title of this article does not refer to the customary warning with which the landlord dismisses his customers. Exactly the same words are often used by conductors at rehearsal when they wish to intimate to the orchestra that some players instead of following his beat follow their own inclinations and are either ahead of or behind their colleagues.

It may seem odd that such a thing should happen since there is but one conductor, whose ruling in respect of "tempo" is not to be questioned by the players. But the musician's mind is not quite ready to accept another's decision. The instinct for "tempo" is inborn and differs with every individual; it even varies in different circumstances and it has happened that the same performer played a movement at a certain speed during rehearsal which was not quite the speed he adopted for the evening concert. No two musicians hold exactly the same views as regards the "correct" timing, and the search for the perfect, the only correct, tempo must seem, to say the least, an exercise of purely academic interest.

We may be sure that the most plausible argument will have no effect on the musician who has studied his subject and made up his mind, just as we may take it for granted that no musician sets out deliberately to disobey the declared intention of the composer. Koussevitzky and Toscanini will give entirely different readings of a Beethoven symphony, while both are very sure that they are faithfully following Beethoven's indications. The experiments of the irresponsible who wants to call attention to his independence are as much out of the question as the heinous ignorance of the young lady from Rio who played *andante* when it should have

been *allegro con brio*. Our concern is with serious interpreters whose work has won general recognition, whose judgment has been ripened by experience, and whose readings differ in speed and may hence be presumed to depart from a composer's direction. That they do differ cannot be questioned. A symphony under Richter went at a different pace than the same symphony did under Weingartner; the metronome beat of a Nikisch performance could never be the same as that of a performance under Wood or Beecham. If there is such a thing as the one and only correct "tempo," it follows that of these five conductors only one was right while the other four were hopelessly wrong. It is the same with singers and soloists, violinists, pianists—especially pianists whose "rubatos" in Chopin often touch the extreme limit of liberty. But, it will be said, the composer is surely the absolute arbiter, the only authority in all that concerns his work. That sounds much more plausible than it is, for how are we to ascertain his intentions unless we apply to those—the singers, players, conductors—who are his interpreters? They do mean to serve him, but they do not necessarily err if they take a liberal rather than a rigid view of his intentions. There is such a thing as amending the letter "so that the spirit may shine forth more brightly."

The composer does not spring from the head of Minerva fully armed, as in a moment of enthusiasm Schumann said of Brahms. He has but a dozen words or so in which to declare his decision. In the process of creation he knows doubts and anxieties. A composer writing a symphony has not quite so easy a job as an estate agent answering an inquiry about cheap flats.

The greater the composer the greater the doubts, since a richer imagination must surely suggest more alternatives, more ideas, more thoughts, which may be quite good in themselves yet not adequate to his immediate purpose. A glance at Beethoven's scrap-book is enough to show how many tests are necessary before the right solution is found, and the scrap-book probably does not represent by any means all the sketches Beethoven made before being satisfied that the form chosen expressed his thought as faithfully as human means can. The sketch-book relates in the main to ideas rather than "tempo," but there is another story of

Beethoven which refers exclusively to "tempo." It is told by Böhm, the first to play the great E flat Quartet, who at the first reading could not reconcile himself to a *meno vivace* Beethoven had inserted at the close of the last movement. After trying it again and again, he decided to ignore it. Beethoven was present at the next rehearsal "crouched in the corner" watching the play. "After the last stroke of the bows he said laconically, 'Let it be so,' and went to the four desks to cross out the *meno vivace* in all four parts." Beethoven was not afraid to accept Böhm's advice. Something similar happened in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto at a point in the first movement which the composer had marked *piu mosso*. At rehearsal the violinist, Adolph Brodsky, who was the first to play the concerto for and with Tchaikovsky, took the passage, if anything, a shade slower than the preceding section. The conductor remonstrated, but Brodsky pointed out that played faster the passage, more suitable to a keyboard than to a string instrument, became sheer noise on the violin. "Well then," said the conductor, "it should be not *piu mosso* but *meno mosso*." The alteration had Tchaikovsky's approval. Unfortunately the printed direction was not corrected and most modern interpreters follow it literally, with a possible gain in effect and a certain loss in clarity.

In the last ten years of his life Elgar, conducting *Gerontius* at the Three Choirs Festivals, surprised the listener by readings which differed essentially from his own former interpretations, more liberal, more delicate, giving the phrase fuller scope and time to reveal its tonal quality. Both readings were Elgar's own yet not both could be right. The most convincing performance of Elgar's Second Symphony was given under Sir Hamilton Harty not many months before the death of that excellent conductor. It took ten minutes longer than any other performance heard before. It charmed and convinced—must we condemn it because it did not conform to official notions? Writing of Beethoven's symphonies, Harty said that "no real musician would ever contemplate touching the orchestral details . . . if he were not convinced that without some such revision our performances cannot fulfil the real desires of the composer." Turning to Weingartner's

essay on the performance of Beethoven's symphonies, the English conductor declared himself impressed by the reasons adduced, "while disagreeing occasionally with Weingartner's tempos." When such authorities disagree, the wisest of us will be silent.

There is no denying that conductors exist who wilfully, "to gain some private end," flout not only official signs but reason and logic. Not very long ago a conductor began the dances in the second act of *Carmen* at a funereal pace. His intention was no mystery. The dance begins at a moderate pace, gaining speed and force as it proceeds, to end in riot. That is clearly what the composer wants. But excess spoilt the plan. Exceptionally slow tempo robbed the beginning of vitality. The tremendous speed at the end reduced the whole texture to an orgiastic concerto for timpani. The melodic phrase had not enough room in which to breathe, and in consequence could not be heard above the din of the frantic drum-beat. That was clearly wrong, because fantastic tempo played havoc with other elements that were as important and, perhaps, even more important.

Indeed, the question of a correct tempo cannot be separated from other matters—phrasing, character of the work, temperament, period. It all hangs together and a flair for what is presumably the right speed is as much instinctive and inborn as a feeling for phrasing, balance, ensemble, colour. Some rough-and-ready rules may be drawn up. If the pace is so slow that it impairs vitality or so hot that it constitutes a danger to clarity, then there is obvious and grievous error. But between these extremes (and only the incompetent indulge in them) there is infinite variety of choice. Like most problems of æsthetics, the solution is not to be found in hard-and-fast rules, but in the individual conscience of the artist.

A NEW MOVEMENT IN MUSIC

HUMPHREY SEARLE



LAST year I attended an "International Festival of Contemporary Chamber Music," held in Paris under the auspices of the Radiodiffusion Française. The conductor and organiser was René Leibowitz, and numerous soloists took part, as well as the Chamber Ensemble of the French National Orchestra. Five countries were represented in the programmes: Austria by Alban Berg and Anton Webern; France by René Leibowitz, Serge Nigg, André Casanova, and Antoine Duhamel; Great Britain by Elisabeth Lutyens and myself; Italy by Luigi Dallapiccola; and the U.S.A. by Arnold Schönberg, Paul Dessau, and Erich Itor Kahn. The performance of a work by the Belgian composer, André Souris, had to be cancelled owing to a last-minute accident. The whole festival was arranged as a tribute to Arnold Schönberg, whose *Ode to Napoleon* was given two performances. Since then Leibowitz and his ensemble have given similar concerts in Belgium, Italy, and this country, where they broadcast in the Third Programme last June.

The interesting thing about all this activity is that it shows how Schönberg's twelve-note technique, which for the last twenty years has been regarded in official musical circles as a lifeless academic exercise incapable of bearing fruit, has now been taken up by many young composers who have never studied in Vienna; and it is particularly remarkable that these developments should be strongest in France and Italy, two countries not in the least prone to intellectualism in music. In Italy great interest is now being shown in this kind of music; a recent series of concerts of Schönberg's works in various Italian cities was an enormous success, and Dallapiccola has become the leader of a new school of

Italian composers who are producing excellent results. Similar developments are beginning, though more slowly, in Belgium and this country, and in fact (as we shall see) the new school of twelve-note composition now stretches from Norway to the Argentine.

At this point I should briefly explain what twelve-note music is. It derives from the fact that by the end of the nineteenth century the diatonic system, based on the major and minor scales, which had been the universal musical language since Haydn's day, was gradually being broken down by the chromatic harmonies of Liszt, Wagner, and their successors, in whose music there was such constant modulation that all feeling of key tended to disappear. Schönberg saw that it was no use continuing to treat the seven notes of the diatonic scale as "naturals" and the five intervening ones as "accidentals," but that in future music would have to be based on the equal use of all the twelve notes of the chromatic scale (this was already tending to happen in practice in the music of the period). Later experience in composing in the new medium led him to introduce the "twelve-note technique," in which the twelve notes of the chromatic scale are used in an order known as a "note-series," which remains the same throughout the work, though of course all kinds of transposition, inversion, etc., are possible. This may sound somewhat academic, but it did in fact arise empirically from Schönberg's own experiments in composition, and it is really no tighter than the complicated technique used by Bach in his fugues, or Haydn and Mozart in their instrumental works. All music needs some kind of organisation behind it, or else it would merely sound chaotic, and Schönberg's solution, though perhaps not the last word on the subject, has at any rate provided the most satisfactory method of using all the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, and appears at present to be the only way out of the impasse in which so many composers find themselves nowadays.

Certainly the young French school have aroused great interest and discussion in their own country. Their leader, René Leibowitz, is only thirty-four; he studied before the war with Schönberg and Webern, and now has a large number of pupils himself. Apart from considerable activity as a composer, he is a gifted conductor and a

pungent critic, and has recently published the only full-length study of Schönberg and his school to appear in any language so far.¹ This is to be followed shortly by his *Introduction à la Musique de Douze Sons*, a technical explanation of Schönberg's system. The most gifted of his pupils at present appears to be Serge Nigg, a twenty-three-year-old composer who was formerly a pupil of Messiaen. His *Variations for Piano and Ten Instruments*, which have twice been broadcast in the Third Programme (with the composer as soloist on the second occasion), show great mastery of instrumental writing as well as ingenuity and originality. Nigg is a composer well worth watching for the future. André Casanova (twenty-eight) has been represented in both Paris and London by his Trio for Flute, Horn, and Viola, which, though overlong for its material, contains many interesting passages. Antoine Duhamel, twenty-two-year-old son of the well-known writer, Georges Duhamel, had his Symphony, Op. 1, played in Paris—a work which at least shows technical competence and originality. At any rate one feels that in Paris there is fruitful ground for future development.

The case of Dallapiccola is somewhat different. Well known as a composer before the war, he experimented with various styles before finally adopting the twelve-note technique in 1942, at the age of thirty-eight, though he has never actually studied with Schönberg or any of his pupils. His first works in this style were three sets of songs on poems translated from the Greek Anthology, and of these his *Sex Carmina Alcaei* (dedicated to Webern) and his *Due Liriche d'Anacreonte* have been performed in the Third Programme. They are an extraordinary combination of the traditional Italian lyrical *cantilena* writing with the Schönbergian technique, and show an exquisite feeling for sonority and emotional impulse. They certainly give the lie to those who say that all twelve-note music is pure mathematics. His *Roncesvals* (1946), a setting of voice and piano of three extracts from the *Chanson de Roland*, is equally remarkable. Two other Italians who have adopted this style are Adone Zecchi and Riccardo Nielsen, and the former was represented at last year's I.S.C.M.

¹*Schönberg et son École*, Janin, Paris, 1947. English translation in preparation.

Festival at Copenhagen by his *Duæ Fugæ Novem Compositæ Sonis* for chamber orchestra, a work written in a modification of Schönberg's technique which also shows a very original feeling for orchestral colour and an interesting sense of construction without being too "difficult" as music.

Elisabeth Lutyens also adopted the twelve-note technique comparatively late in life. Though she had long been attracted by the sound of Berg's and Webern's music, she has never had any technical training in Schönberg's methods, and did not study them in detail till 1940, when she wrote her Concerto for Nine Instruments. She followed this up during the war with several other instrumental works which gradually show a freer handling of the style; but it is in two recent works—*O Saisons, O Châteaux* for soprano and string orchestra, and *The Pit*, a dramatic scene based on a Welsh mining disaster, for tenor and bass soli, women's chorus, and chamber orchestra—that her lyrical and emotional powers really reach their full expression. This is music that shows that the twelve-note technique need not be forbiddingly cerebral; it is not a rigid system, but a flexible mould through which any composer can find his own means of expression.

Another interesting figure is the sixty-year-old Norwegian composer, Fartein Valen, whose *Sonetto di Michelangelo* for chamber orchestra was performed at the Copenhagen Festival. Though not twelve-note music in the strictest sense of the term, it uses a serial technique derived from Berg, and has a great deal of Berg's power of emotional expression and sensitivity. Valen has apparently mostly worked in isolation, being little known even in his own country, but his work was certainly one of the most interesting items in the festival and he deserves wider recognition. Two other published works of Valen for chamber orchestra, *Pastorale* and *An die Hoffnung*, date, like the *Sonetto*, apparently from about 1930, and show the same qualities; it would be interesting to hear the works he has written since.

Valen has now gathered round him a circle of pupils in Bergen; similarly in Brussels, André Souris, who is a gifted conductor and writer as well as a composer, is exerting an important influence on the younger generation of Belgian composers. Many former pupils

of Schönberg and Webern are also active in America, and it seems that now many young native composers of both North and South America are adopting the twelve-note technique. So it can truly be said that the movement, which Schönberg started in Vienna forty years ago has now at last begun to spread out all over the world.

I think this argues that the musical language of our time is gradually changing. At present nearly every composer has been influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, by Schönberg's discoveries—Vaughan Williams's *Fourth Symphony* and Britten's *Peter Grimes* are two examples from English music alone which would probably never have been written but for Schönberg. But the majority of present-day composers either attempt to incorporate some elements of Schönberg's style into the old diatonic framework or else resort to a pastiche of the style of some previous period with a few "modern" twists added. Neither of these methods is satisfactory as a permanent solution. No doubt the twelve-note composers are at present some way ahead of their audiences as far as comprehension of their music goes, but I feel that as their works become more familiar this difficulty will gradually disappear. This style has after all made the greatest positive contribution to the progress of music in this century, and I think it is the only one which gives young composers a solid basis on which to learn the craft of composition. How they handle it is, of course, the affair of each individual composer—you won't automatically produce good music simply by using the technique—but Berg, Dallapiccola, Valen, and Elisabeth Lutyens at any rate have shown that music of this kind can produce as powerful an emotional effect as anything written in previous periods.

THE SYMPHONIC TREADMILL

CYRIL BOURNE-NEWTON



WHEN away on holiday, the last thing I ever wish to see is a gramophone! For in my capacity as Musical Director of the Brighton and Hove Gramophone Orchestral Society, and in the course of lecturing to different organisations from Youth Clubs (where some of the youngsters don't even know if they like music or not) to seasoned and critical listeners, I must have turned over thousands of discs. And I suppose during nearly three hundred recorded symphony concerts, given before countless different faces, I have gleaned a pretty good idea of what a large percentage of concert-goers think about the music they hear.

Last year I presented for the Society in the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, a series of recorded symphony concerts. The object of these concerts was to endeavour to stimulate interest among concert-goers in meritorious neglected music, both past and present, and in the latter category unfortunately we have to include almost eighty per cent of what is being written to-day.

Unlike audiences in continental cities, where I believe it is often the thing not only to demonstrate enthusiastically for what one likes, but to register hostility for what one rejects, the English public are a polite and long-suffering lot, whose applause, more often than not, cannot be taken as a true assessment of their feelings and reactions to the music performed. A work they obviously loathe can be greeted with polite acclamation, where a succession of boos and hisses would really be of more value to the concert promoter! How, then, is one to test the "musical pulse" of an audience with some degree of accuracy?

The prosaic and unimaginative will say this is not necessary; the public, they retort, know what they like and what they don't

like, and point to a packed "all Tchaikovsky" concert and an empty hall where unknown music is being given as the answer. But how wrong they are! The public are maddeningly quixotic; they can be tempted by means of cunningly placed "musical bait" to endure, and then go wild over, a work that they had not the slightest intention of hearing by design. The average concert-goer may know what he likes, but his knowledge of the repertoire is so exceedingly limited that he has heard virtually nothing.

We thought of an ingenious idea (which might well be adopted by an enterprising "live" concert organisation) to find out how the public reacted to the unknown works presented in our Pavilion programmes. Each member of the audience had a card, on one side of which was the programme of works to be played, and on the reverse side were columns, in which they were asked to comment on the music (admiration and contempt were equally welcomed), and also to give each work a percentage of marks according to their reactions. The maximum percentage was ten points for each work. The main interest, of course, lay in pitting "dark horses" against the standard popular favourites. The audiences present were representative of all types of music-lovers, and came from all parts of the country, holiday-makers mingling with the local partisans. This information was established by a space on the ticket for the name and address of the voter.

Since the musical public will only attend in strength concerts that contain a generous helping of their well-worn classics, and it was the public rather than the connoisseur that we wanted, I "sugared the pill" liberally at first. As the public know that they don't care about unfamiliar music, one would assume naturally that the unknown works would get low marks, and come in for some very scathing criticisms. But no! Our enigmatic public, forced to endure a percentage of new music, since it was in the first half of the programme and they had obviously come for the popular pieces which followed later, found the dreaded unknown quantities not only attractive, but positively inspiring and beautiful. And at least they had the honesty to admit this and scribbled fulsome eulogies on the backs of their cards.

As our concerts continued, more and more different people

attended, and at the conclusion of the season I had well over 1,500 cards, which were, and still are, of great value in assessing what sort of symphonic music has given the greatest amount of pleasure.

The judgment of these ordinary concert-goers proved remarkably intelligent and correct, and those fanatics who were hoping against hope that all the unknown works would be proudly seated at the crest of the final poll, and the well-loved classics abjectly humiliated to the bottom, were sadly, and quite rightly, disappointed.

But the voting results proved in many instances sensational, and though the actual number of unknown works that outvoted popular ones were few and far between, there were often "close fights" with the standard compositions holding a fifteen- or twenty-point lead only. Two remarkable triumphs for the unknowns might be mentioned: Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3 for organ, two pianos, and orchestra, a vivid and lavish work, condemned, it seems, to eternal oblivion, outpointed Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* by two points, and Macdowell's Piano Concerto No. 2 in D minor (which might well become a second Grieg Concerto) gained a lead of five points over Sibelius's Second Symphony!

But the actual outpointing of the popular works by the unknowns was of secondary importance. What was of such great value were the very encouraging high percentages ninety-five per cent. of these forgotten "musical phantoms" totalled, and the very illuminating comments in praise of their merits. Rachmaninoff's lovely Second Symphony (never heard outside of Birmingham) gained 882 points out of a possible 1,000, and was lauded as "deeply moving and magnificent," "better than Tchaikovsky's Fourth," "too beautiful to describe." Ernest Chausson's luckless Symphony in B flat collected 763 points out of 980, and was termed "more colourful and brilliant than Franck's Symphony," "a revelation to all Wagnerites," "a great French symphony; why on earth isn't it ever played?" Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 2 in C minor (Little Russian), played at the initial concert, literally "brought down the Pavilion," Holst's *The Planets*

was called "a mighty and unforgettable musical experience," and *Tintagel*, by Sir Arnold Bax (President of our Society), was classed as "a colourful and inspired seascape worthy of ranking with *Fingal's Cave*." Many people expressed astonishment that such music as this could have been allowed to remain so long hidden away; in some cases our naïve public were hurt and indignant at the neglect!

A very fair share of contemporary music languished in the ranks of the unknowns, and though in most cases it did not command such high votes as the neglected works of the past, it was well received by the majority of the audiences. It was significant that the most successful piece was Bliss's Piano Concerto, a work which literally seizes the attention of the listener by the sheer dynamic force of its energy and personality, and far less successful was Vaughan-Williams's retiring, contemplative Fifth Symphony. Other works by English-speaking composers to have a large following were those of George Butterworth, Samuel Barber, and John Ireland, represented by smaller works, *An English Rhapsody*, *A Shropshire Lad*, *Adagio for Strings*, and *A London Overture* respectively. The pungent wit and brilliance of Walton's *Scapino Overture*, however, amused and pleased only a handful of the audience.

In the face of the above evidence I suggest that the public are not qualified to call the tune, even though they pay the piper. It is not that their judgment is bad, but they completely lack imagination and a spirit of adventure. These are the fundamental causes of the dull, lifeless programmes, drawn time and time again from the popular repertoire for the average series of symphonic concerts.

Depressing though the situation is, there is a remedy, and it lies, of course, in the hands of those responsible for the building of programmes. But how many of these gentlemen (especially impresarios) know their business? It is just another case of the blind leading the blind! Every programme-builder should know the symphonic repertoire from A to Z; he ought to be able to sense what unfamiliar music, whether old or new, is likely to have a comparatively easy appeal; he must study carefully and scienti-

fically the reactions of his audiences, and know how to pander, to a certain degree, to their various tastes, and reconcile their differences. Obviously this is going to be a lengthy and laborious task, and the surprises that a purveyor of musical art has to offer must be sold sparingly at first in order to intrigue and hold the interest of his public. Thus a long-term policy is imperative, and the programme-builder's aim should be to improve and to educate unceasingly. In other words, he should love music-making as well as money-making.

Perhaps one day programme-builders of this kind will be given their head, and a chance to put new life into what has now become moribund. In the meantime the symphonic treadmill continues to go round and round in the cage with sickening monotony!

MENDELSSOHN REVALUED—2

ROBERT L. JACOBS



MENDELSSOHN'S music, I said, is pure, passionless, unclouded. Melodies are tuneful, harmonies euphonious, rhythms flowing, forms smooth and symmetrical. All those chaotic effects of musical sound—unconfined dissonance, unrelated harmony, abrupt rhythm, violent dynamics—those chaotic effects employed by Beethoven to set up the tensions and conflicts, which form the essence of a great "development section," are abhorred. Indeed, without any very great straining of language one might say that in Mendelssohn's music, as in his life, development is arrested.

Not that the music does not contain plenty of excellent and delightful "development" in the textbook sense of the word. For example, consider the "development-section" of one of his best first movements, that of the *Italian Symphony*. A fresh subject (in technical language an "episode") is introduced, cleverly embroidered by a dainty counterpoint lifted from the "exposition"; it is treated sequentially; the initial principal theme of the movement is drawn in, and the two, alternating and combining in new keys and new orchestral colours, build up to a series of *fortissimo* statements; after the climax Mendelssohn duly modulates to his "recapitulation-section," neatly employing the characteristic phrase of his main theme. All is logical, masterly, graceful—but the ideas do not clash, do not generate tension, do not gain in stature. They merely disport themselves. There is no shadow, no surprise, no mystery. The atmosphere of happiness conveyed by the themes is merely sustained by their "development."

In this playfulness, this happiness, this inherently childlike spirit lies the key, I believe, to Mendelssohn's astonishing power as a tone-painter, which Wagner admired. Few composers have exploited more successfully than these two the mysterious affinity between the elements of music and natural phenomena. The

material they employ—Mendelssohn in the magical *Hebrides Overture*, Wagner in the *Flying Dutchman* and the earlier portions of the *Ring*—is strikingly similar: terse motives struck from the common chord; picturesque stretches of diatonic figuration sustained by strings; rippling ascending *arpeggio* themes; surging chromatic scales; hovering trills. But the spirit is totally different. Wagner dramatises Nature. The stormy seascape of the *Flying Dutchman* is a symbol of Fate—of Fate pursuing a luckless hero, with whom Wagner, when he wrote the music, had every reason to identify himself (he had fled the seas from his creditors and was struggling to keep body and soul together in Paris). Mendelssohn's music, on the other hand, is content to reflect Nature. The seascape depicted in the *Hebrides* he experienced as a tourist, not as a fugitive: it was something enjoyable and exciting to write home about in the *Reisebriefe*. His music describes it in that child-like spirit. Hence its peculiar magic: it is the creation of a mind at one with its surroundings, a mind unsullied by pain, capable of reflecting the innocent purposeless beauty of the world it sees.

Precisely the same qualities animate Mendelssohn's religious choral works. What one admires in *Elijah* is the wonderful felicity of the choral writing, the wonderful ease with which the composer plays upon his mighty instrument. His ideas seem, as it were, born to fulfil themselves in the traditional forms of vocal counterpoint; they enter so smoothly, imitate and combine with each other so naturally, so euphoniously. Too much so. Here, as in the development sections of Mendelssohn's instrumental music, one misses the sense of struggle; it is as though the tremendous questions which religion ponders are being begged. Whereas Bach in the *Mass in B minor* and Handel in *Messiah* raise us to the stars, Mendelssohn in *Elijah* merely bathes us in dew.

Here, very clearly, one can see that fatal mistake of Mendelssohn which has caused, and will, one imagines, always cause, posterity to regard him *scornfully* as a minor composer. The mantle he donned was ludicrously too big for him. In the eyes of the prosperous burghers of mid-Victorian England, who acclaimed him so frantically, it became him: those days they had every reason to believe with Tennyson that "somehow good will be the final

goal of ill." Baudelaire and Dostoievsky, Schopenhauer and Freud—not to mention two world wars—have taught us better. Mendelssohn in earnest, Mendelssohn endeavouring with filial piety to match music to an object, which (as his father had said) "by its fervour, its universal sufficiency and perspicuity, can take the place of the pious emotions of former days," merely strikes us as mawkish, insipid, sentimental. With the highest of intentions he seems to be committing the unpardonable, to be trivialising the great issues of life.

But at his finest, writing in the style of his early music (that style he had been advised to "hang upon a nail"), what an artist Mendelssohn was! Consider the *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*—the ætherial horn and wood-wind chords, the elfin staccato counterpoint of the violins, the delicious appropriateness of the instruments to the ideas they colour; consider the final soaring stanza of the *andante* of the Violin Concerto from which a fine player always seems able to evoke the ultimate delicate beauty of violin tone; consider the rushing sparkling *Ruy Blas Overture* (it was composed at such break-neck speed that Mendelssohn had it in the hands of the copyists three days after he was commissioned to write it!); consider not the first movements nor the slow ones of his instrumental works, where usually (though not invariably) he fails to fill his canvas, but the apt, gay vivaciousness of his concluding *prestos* and *molto vivaces*; and consider the simple unpretentious lyricism of the *Songs without Words*. All this music is in its way so consummate, so all-of-a-piece, so rounded and perfect that, admiring it, one is almost tempted to exclaim that all this talk of arrested development has nothing to do with the case, that Mendelssohn's genius was completely fulfilled in these masterpieces!

But no. Your musical genius's ability to fulfil himself, like anyone else's, depends on capacity to assimilate and integrate all the spheres of his experience—a capacity innate in some men perhaps, but in others, so modern psychology reveals, frustrated in the crucial formative years of childhood. Mendelssohn seems to have lacked it. The shocks and sorrows and conflicts of life were not so much grist to the mill of his art, were not (the hackneyed metaphor

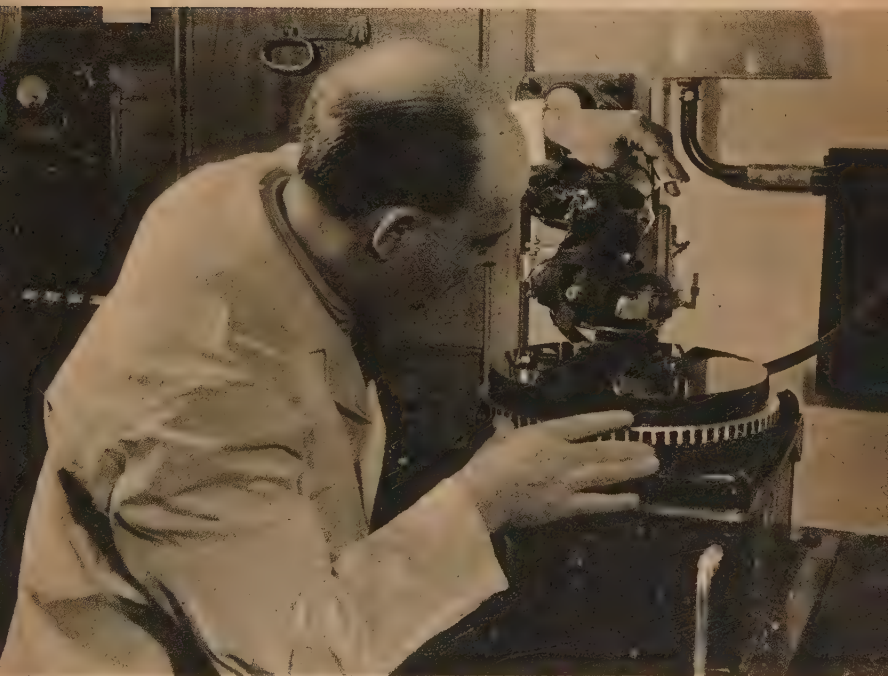
is unavoidable) irritants stimulating him to secrete the pearls of his genius. He was not attuned to suffering, could not absorb, could not sublimate it. Despite the perfection of his best music one cannot but conclude that he was a *manqué* genius; a genius who might have composed, but failed to compose, music capable of conveying the ecstasy and passion and anguish of life fully lived.

Finally I would ask: Are there not here and there in his works passages pointing to potentialities of greater things? Do not the dramatic Baal choruses in *Elijah* suggest that Mendelssohn might have written a fine opera? Is there not a hint of depth in *Elijah's* "It is enough"; of mystery in the *andante con moto* of the *Italian Symphony*; of passion in the E minor Prelude; of sadness in the *adagio* of the F minor Quartet, composed after Fanny's death? Such hints may be found elsewhere, for all one knows—one hears so little Mendelssohn nowadays. No doubt in this centenary year more of his music will be played. Let us hear those choruses from *St. Paul* and from the *Walpurgisnacht*, which look so fine on paper; let us hear the other overtures, *The Story of the Lovely Melusine* and the *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*; let us hear some of the incidental music to *Antigone* and *Ædipus*; let us hear some of the organ music, some of the chamber works. Something like another Mendelssohn festival is wanted. Then—"post festum," as Mendelssohn, who had a mania for altering a composition after its first festival performance, used to say jocularly—we shall be able to answer all the questions.

RECIPE FOR MOULDED MUSIC

Take a mess of trego, carbon black, shellac, copal, and resin, put in a press, warm it, cool it, and serve when you will!

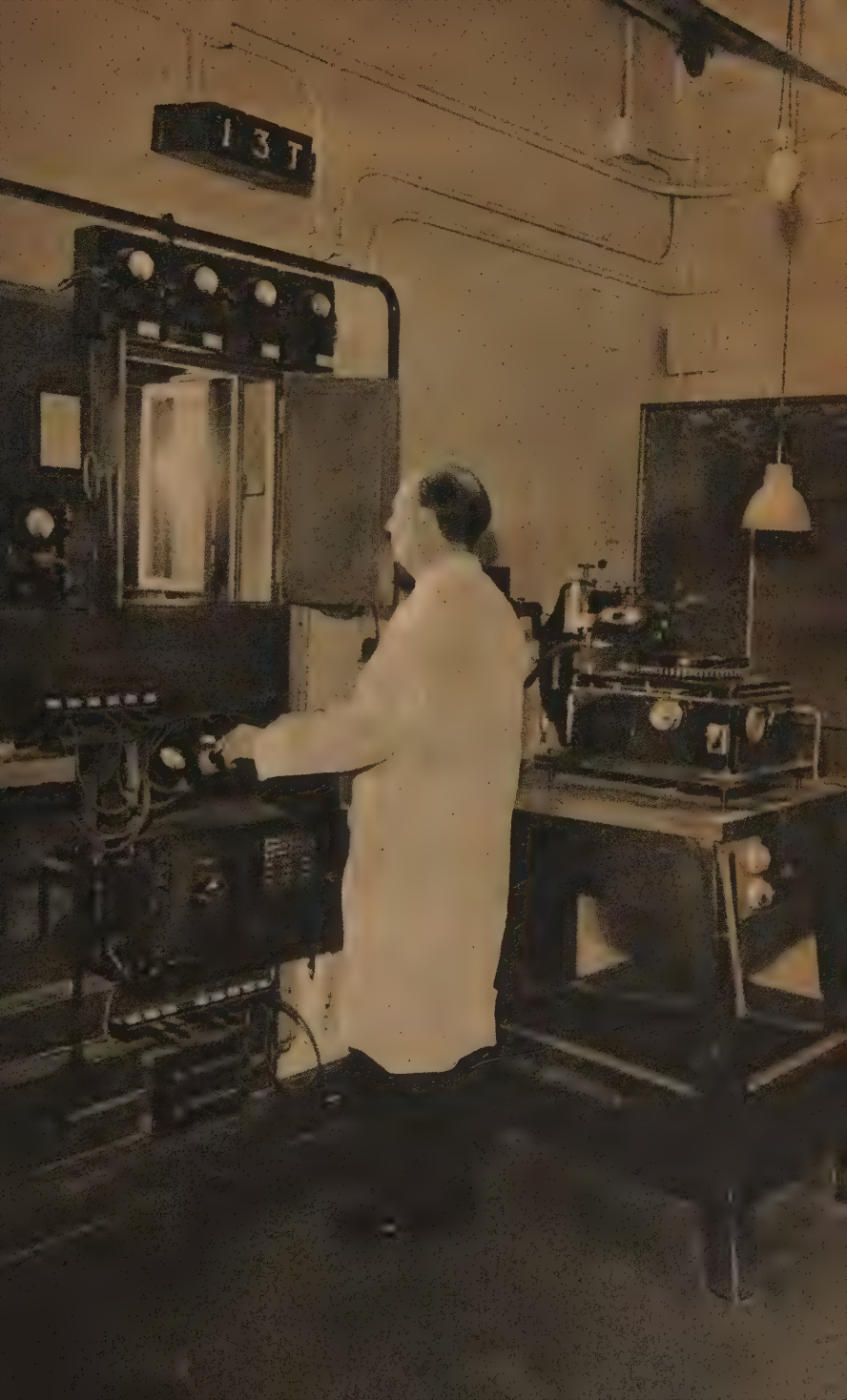
The story of the making of a gramophone record, with photographs by courtesy of The Gramophone Company.



A blank wax—selected from the thermostatically controlled storage cupboard—is placed on the recording table and the initial run-in groove cut. All is now ready for recording.



Through the window of the recording room the engineer watches the orchestra playing in the studio while the wax disc, revolving under the cutter, records the voice of the orchestra picked up by the microphones. The grooves average 96 to the inch, and the groove length of a twelve-inch record is about 700 feet.





Recording completed, the wax is carefully examined and then sent to the factory, unpacked in a dust-free room and again microscopically examined for damage. The first operation (pictured above) is to engrave the eccentric groove necessary to operate automatic brakes on turntables.



The next stage is the making of a metal master-copy of the recording. The wax is coated with a very fine bronze powder to make it electrically conductive.



The coated disc is now secured in a holder and a metal pin fitted in the spindle-hole to provide an electrical contact.

The disc is then immersed in an electro-plating bath and continually revolved to ensure an even coating of copper.





The copper shell, which has been grown on the wax, is now removed. The electro-plating process has rendered the wax disc useless and the copper shell is now the only "master." This is strengthened by nickel-plating. It could not be played as it is a reverse of the original wax, having ridges in place of grooves.



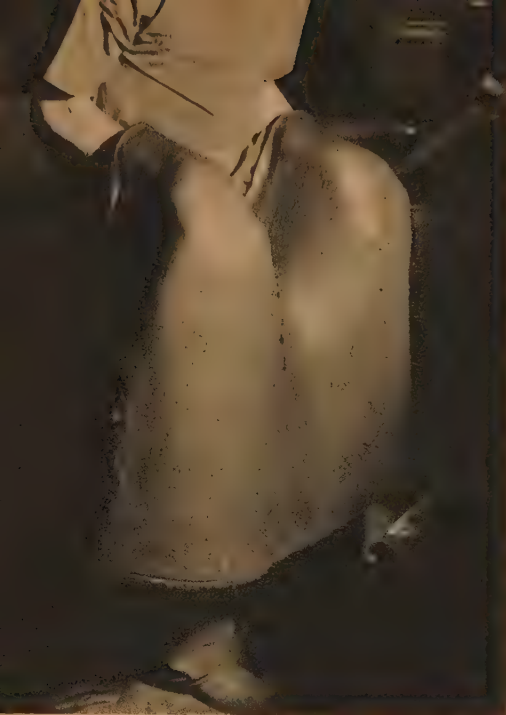
Only a few records, for test purposes, are made from this "master." For production other stampers are derived from the "master" in two stages. First a metal deposit, termed the "mother," is grown on the "master." This picture shows "master" and "mother" being separated. The "mother" can be used for playing tests because it is a positive. The second stage is the production, by similar deposition process, of stampers or matrices from the "mother."



The matrix is soldered to a rigid backing to withstand the subsequent pressing process used for producing the finished records. The matrix in the picture is being carefully lowered on to the already tinned backing resting on a hot-plate. A hydraulic press will ensure a perfect join.

The raw material from which the finished records are made consists mainly of tregoe, carbon black, shellac, copal, and resin. It is converted to powder form in the great grinding equipment shown below.





After various grinding processes
the mixture comes out as a
"blanket"—plastic when warm,
brittle when cold.



It is then passed along rolling and cooling conveyors which
deliver the material marked in lengths to be broken into "biscuits"
containing the correct amount for the finished record.



Two matrices are fixed in the record press for a double-sided record and the appropriate labels are attached.



Heat from the hot-plate makes the "biscuit" sufficiently plastic to be rolled into a convenient shape for insertion in the press.

The rolled-up "biscuit" goes
into the press like this . . .

. . . and comes out like this,
complete with label.



In the press the "biscuit" is
first heated for moulding and
then cooled so that the disc
comes out quite hard. It is cut
to the correct size by a cutting
edge round the lower matrix.



After leaving the press room the records are checked for perfection and correct labelling.



The records are now mounted on high-speed turntables and the edges ground smooth.



A number of records from the pressing are given a life test. This test is also given to specimens pressed from the original "master."



A final polish, a final check, and the record is packed into its envelope ready for the shelf of the music shop and, perhaps, an honoured place in your home.

TO START AN ARGUMENT

MUSIC WITHOUT TAXATION?



GUNN GWENNET says—

For the first time there seems to be stirring in a Government of Britain a genuine desire to encourage a fuller flowering of the native genius in the arts.

It has long been recognised that we have lagged far behind in the matter of state patronage of music, painting and sculpture, literature, drama, and ballet. We cannot, therefore, complain that on the continent of Europe one has often heard our culture slightly spoken of for that reason. In his propaganda broadcasts the insufferable Goebbels made full use of this foreign attitude towards us, describing the British as a nation little better than barbarians, lacking in culture and without even a national theatre.

Although this generalisation is, of course, absurdly untrue, unfortunately many believed it and many may still do so. It may be that the terrible war has forced the Government to realise better the value of the arts to the community and the important part the work of our creative artists might play in our relations with the rest of the world.

A recently published volume, *The Visual Arts*, is the result of a survey made by The Arts Enquiry, sponsored by the Dartington Hall Trustees and having the unofficial blessing of the Minister of Education and the Reconstruction Secretariat. In *The Visual Arts* it is revealed that the profession of the artist is in grave danger of early extinction unless the state acts swiftly as a generous patron of the painter, the sculptor, and the designer. It seems that in peacetime only about £600 a year was spent by the Government on the purchase of original works by living artists, no more than would keep one or two artists alive, as the survey points out. This volume is to be followed by three others, surveying

music, drama, and the factual film, equally informative on their present condition and their relations to the state.

The most valuable pointer indicating that the Government intends to foster the arts is the conversion of the formerly Government-subsidised Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) into The Arts Council, a permanent official body. The Board of Trade, too, has appointed a Council of Industrial Design. There is also a Parliamentary Arts Group, of which Mrs. Barbara Ayrton Gould, M.P., is chairman. So at long last something important may be done for the arts, and we can only hope that the administration of whatever be decided on will be worthy of the effort.

To encourage all these artistic activities on an adequate scale, truly vast sums of money would be required. It is equally certain that, following such a devastating war and in view of the pressing needs of reconstruction, it would not be possible to squeeze the necessary finances out of the overburdened taxpayer nor reasonable to try to do so.

Is there a means of obtaining the money to enable the state to encourage the production of works of high quality and also foster an appreciation of the arts among a far wider public without imposing any new taxation whatever? It is my purpose here to show that there is a simple expedient waiting to be put into operation which would implement these objectives.

The public are the owners of a great deal of valuable property which, although it is their very own, is being sold to them over and over again. Instead of their receiving any financial benefit from its use by a very small section of the community, they have to pay the traders in that section when they themselves want to enjoy the use of their own property. This looks like a delightfully Gilbertian situation. It is.

What, then, is this valuable public property? It is what is known as Expired Copyrights.

The Copyright Act of 1911 gives to the author of an original work—musical, graphic, literary, dramatic, or architectural—the sole reproduction rights therein for a period of his lifetime and for fifty years after his death. This enables authors to obtain fees or

"royalties," or both, by way of remuneration for allowing others to reproduce what they create. Thus composers of sheet music receive a royalty on every copy of their compositions sold by the publishers to the trade; on performances; on gramophone records; on perforated rolls; and films are also a further source of income from music.

A single work may bring its author a very large sum. Before he died, Sir Arthur Sullivan received about £11,000 in royalties from sales of *The Lost Chord*, and it is still selling. According to experts, if the smallest fee paid on a musical work had been paid on *Messiah* since it was first sung in London in 1743, performances in Britain alone would have yielded over £2,000,000. To-day, the total sum paid annually in royalties and performing fees to the owners of British works still in copyright is huge.

This brings us to the heart of the financial plan which I am proposing. Let us see what becomes of copyrights when they expire fifty years after the death of a creator of a work capable of enjoying copyright. They become that "valuable public property" already referred to and anyone may publish or perform the works without paying anything to anybody. Certain commercial concerns, naturally enough, exploit those expired copyrights in works for which there is still a public demand. They certainly have a right to do this, but—and this is important—they *do not reduce the prices to the public proportionately to the amounts of the royalties no longer payable to the former owners of the copyrights*. These owners, by the by, must be, for the last twenty-five years of the period of copyright, the heirs only of the original authors, and any number of publishers may publish a work still in copyright provided they pay a royalty of ten per cent to those heirs. This is because artistic brain-workers are considered to be too brainless to provide for descendants living twenty-five years after they themselves have died.

To the individual purchaser of a non-copyright work, to give away ten per cent, say, every time he buys one may not seem of much importance: 6d. on a 5s. book which cost the same to produce as a 5s. copyright book on which royalties must be paid; 6d. on a 5s. volume of music or a gramophone record; or 6d. on a

5s. seat to witness a play or an opera no longer yielding any royalties or fees to its author's heirs.

In the aggregate, these sums which were once royalties mount to a truly great total every year in Britain. Paid by the public, the public receive no benefit from them. Instead, then, of bringing the term of copyright to an end fifty years after an author's death, *let the royal ties and fees be paid for all time into a National Fund for the Encouragement of the Arts.*

Several firms of music publishers issue series of albums containing piano pieces and songs which are no longer in copyright. The prices of these albums range or, rather, used to range, from 1s. to 3s., according to contents, and they are of excellent value. It is estimated that the sales of some of these popular series of albums have well exceeded one million copies. Reckoning, say, one million copies of a single successful series sold at 2s. each copy, we find that £100,000 would have been paid by the public to the publishers. Had the National Fund been established at the time publication of this series of non-copyright works commenced, a ten per cent royalty would have contributed no less than £10,000 towards the encouragement of the arts.

To give but one instance from the theatre: on its revival in London *The Beggar's Opera* was played at Hammersmith over 1,400 times. If the average takings were no more than £50 at each performance, five per cent only of the whole of the receipts would have yielded £3,500 for the National Fund. At present a successful non-copyright play may be in competition with a new play by a living author at a theatre next door, with both theatres maintaining the full customary admission prices. In this connection, Mr. Bernard Shaw is reported to have said: "Copyrights ought not to be allowed to go derelict. My objection to Shakespeare is that he is a 'blackleg.'" Had my plan been in operation right from the Shakespearean era, the performing fees his plays would have contributed to the National Fund would have sufficed to build, equip, and maintain National Theatres all over the country. It is not too late to begin! Hollywood magnates, too, who raid our classics, should contribute fees for the right to show

here films made from British non-copyright masterpieces, such as *David Copperfield*.

The Fund would function very rapidly and soon grow to great proportions were copyright to be re-created in *all* works in which it has expired. Music would benefit not only from fees derived from sales and performances of the now non-copyright compositions of British composers, but also from sales and performances of the numerous foreign works in which copyright has expired in their respective countries.

Works by the ever-popular Italian, German, and French composers—Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, Berlioz, and others—would thus yield very considerable contributions to swell the Fund.

Our art galleries and museums are full of treasures of great value. For a paltry fee of about 7s. 6d., a publisher of prints may photograph an old master for which the public has paid £50,000, say, and then publish reproductions of it which may yield him a profit of several hundred pounds. On all reproductions of objects of art owned by the nation royalties should be paid into the National Fund.

Certain works should, of course, be exempted from contributions: all books and music published at not more than 1s. per copy, thus to ensure a supply of cheap works to the public; books habitually used in any religious service; works published solely for use in schools; dramatic pieces not produced for private profit; publications by the state.

Here are a few of the artistic activities towards the encouragement of which the administrators of the National Fund might make grants, offer scholarships and prizes, give commissions, and make purchases:

The composition of symphonies, concertos, oratorios, operas, and the less common forms of music; the provision of public concerts and bands in parks and other open spaces; the adequate presentation of plays, operas, and entertainments of artistic merit by dramatic and musical societies and national theatres; the purchase for the nation of works of art by living artists; the making of artistic films of educational value for use in schools; architec-

tural designing and the decoration of public buildings (in Sweden and some other countries a percentage of the total cost of erecting public buildings is required to be spent on their decoration by artists and sculptors); designing for commercial products, such as pottery, glassware, silverware, jewellery, furniture, fabrics, and costumes.

In order to get the plan into effective operation at an early date, the Government might advance a substantial sum to the National Fund, the amount to be repaid over a period of years from the growing receipts. This method is adopted in Russia in the case of certain artistic activities in need of encouragement.

A detailed exposition of the above plan, together with a draft of a short Act of Parliament, may be examined in the report of the writer's lecture to the Royal Society of Arts.¹

ON THE OTHER HAND

HUBERT FOSS says—

Benjamin Disraeli demanded that "a University should be a place of light, liberty, and learning." Under our present enlightened civilisation, liberty has dwindled to dwarfish dimensions. Light is already limited and here is a proposal to tax learning. I daily expect a project to tax the "splendid, silent sun" and the "moving moon."

The first effect Mr. Gwennet's "plan" had on me was to make me feel so aged—"old and full of sleep and nodding by the fire." Dragging my long white beard absent-mindedly out of the inkpot, I dreamed a dream peopled with W. T. Stead and Henry Nevinson, Shakespeare and Milton, Plato and Confucius, and many others. In that dream I watched their familiar faces and heard their varying comments as they were severally told by a Socialist Recording Angel, trumpetless, but handing out buff forms, that under the new education-for-all policy of proletarian improvement, the works of each of them would in future be taxed, but not, of course, "publications by the state."

¹ *The Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, March 17th, 1939.

The habit of writing "Dialogues of the Dead," started by (newly taxable) Lucian, has been carried on through the ages by the (also taxable) Matthew Prior, George Lyttelton, Walter Savage Landor, Maurice Baring, Eric Linklater, and others. I feel very tempted to add to their number. I fancy one might make quite an entertaining thing out of a discussion about the *Areopagitica* between Milton and Mr. Gwennet. Macaulay might join in on Milton's side, and as counsel for Mr. Gwennet, Oliver Cromwell would need no briefing. Plato and Professor Harold Laski might be described in erudite argument on the state and the arts. Mæcenas's frenzy of disappointment would spend its fury against the icy rock of Mr. Hugh Dalton: who would no doubt be glad to pay a fee every time he sang "the song in his heart"—even if it were *I Love Sixpence*. Aristotle would be charmed with the logic, the ethics, and the politics of an argument (if Mr. Gwennet were still engaged with Milton, it could be read out by a civil servant from the Inland Revenue Department) which naïvely states that "the public are the owners of a great deal of valuable property," and deduces from that premise they should therefore pay "ten per cent, say, each time they buy" their own non-copyright work. And the "black-leg" Shakespeare should in fairness be given an opportunity to discuss things with George Bernard Shaw, and to point out that the latter has, despite the taunt, made a great deal more money out of his own plays than ever Shakespeare did in his lifetime out of his.

Before we examine in detail the errors in Mr. Gwennet's statements of fact, and the fallacies that deeply scar his argument, it might be well to consider a little farther the relation of the state to the arts under a Socialist Government. Discussion of the subject fills the air at this moment. A year or two ago, Geoffrey Keynes discovered and has recently published with Rupert Hart-Davies a forgotten essay that Rupert Brooke wrote in 1910 on "Democracy and the Arts." Rupert Brooke was at first a "William Morris sort of Socialist," but later became a full member of the Fabian Society. This passionate plea for the state subsidy of the artist was ably debated in the *Spectator* of May 9th, 1947, by Harold Nicolson. More recently still, the Turnstile Press has

published a pamphlet by J. B. Priestley, called *The Arts Under Socialism*, with the sub-title "being a lecture given to the Fabian Society, with a postscript on 'what the Government should do for the Arts here and now.'" He early states the obvious danger of state subsidy by stating "firmly that, in my view, the Socialist State exists for the artists, and not the artists for the state." He pleads for "favourable conditions for the artist, that the state should be a generous patron of artists of many kinds," but he does not believe that "it should maintain its artists so long as they are able to work and to keep themselves." He will not have "any proposed system that would turn artists who are neither ill nor old into civil servants or state pensioners." There is a whole section on "The Danger of Committee Art" (I for one cannot avoid shuddering every time I think of the Soviet composers pooling and sharing their ideas!). He demands that the state should not superimpose ideas and themes upon the artist, through the agency of committees and ministerial orders: the state must realise that "the artist works from inside." "The state," he concludes, "can only clear the ground and build a wall against the cold wind: it cannot pull out of the dark soil the flowers of art; only the artist can do that." But he demands with eloquent and passionate words that the Government should make available in large quantities paper, and brushes, and canvas, and printing labour, and concert-halls so that the artist may express his thoughts and have opportunity to live by their dissemination to the public.

Mr. Priestley goes about as far as most artists I know would care to be taken: and a little farther than many, including myself. I profoundly agree with Harold Nicolson when he says of the writer, "I refuse to believe that it can do him any harm" to have a profession other than that of the pen. I shrink into my shell with horror at the thought of any form of state control of art. I cannot believe Mr. Gwennet's statement (based upon the Arts Enquiry report, *The Visual Arts*) that "the profession of the artist is in grave danger of early extinction" without state patronage. It is simply not true: the state may well become a buyer of pictures, since to-day it takes unto itself all the money that private individuals used to spend on paintings to present to public art gal-

leries. But, I earnestly pray, no more. The state control of thought is getting perilously near us, and *that* is what will cause the extinction of the artist. The less the state interferes with art and artists the better for everyone concerned. State interference is never *inclusive*: it is always *exclusive*. The administration of the law is not creative: it is invariably negative. No Government can say "you shall": its medium is the ban, the veto, the restriction. Under state patronage, there would not be more artists and more art, but less. "Rarely, rarely, comest thou, Spirit of Delight." It will not come at the call of Sir Stafford Cripps, nor to the whistle of a million civil servants. "Art," wrote Shakespeare, "is made tongue-tied by authority": "captive good attending captive ill."

"Truly vast sums" would not be required. In "the pressing needs of reconstruction," art need *not* languish, as we can see in several countries of Europe: it languishes where there is no such need, as in Spain. And if Mr. Gwennet is right to say that "it would not be possible to squeeze the necessary finances out of the overburdened taxpayer, nor reasonable to try to do so," then why in the name of reason does he propound a plan which enforces that very evil?

Mr. Gwennet has some distressingly inept ideas about taxation, and about publishing as well. He may remember the amusing stories of income-tax notices sent to John Gay at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith (there are a number of other and similar authentic cases); but he does not seem to realise that *The Beggar's Opera* as played there was the copyright arrangement by Frederick Austin, who I am sure paid his rates and his income tax, and under this plan would be called upon also to pay John Gay's ten per cent to the National Fund. To talk of this levy upon works in the public domain as a "royalty" is gravely misleading: it is a tax on learning, a direct tax on art. "So Truth be in the field, we do injuriously", wrote Milton, "by licensing and prohibiting to doubt her strength." What of the collection of this tax? What would it cost? Would it be less complicated than the abandoned betting tax? Would it be leviable on foreign authors—on Dante and Boccaccio, on Goethe and Heine, on Racine and Molière and Rabelais? On nursery rhymes and folk-tales, as well as Piers

Plowman and Shakespeare? Ought we not to consult the illustrious authors of the past whether they are sufficiently sympathetic with an immature Socialist Government to allow it to levy, for *Great Britain only*, an impost on their learning and poetry? One has a suspicion that they would smile more readily on the whole of the rest of the world, still retaining the liberty of reading the great thoughts of the greatest men without taxation. This scheme is indeed "a penny for your thoughts."

It is an unhistorical and indeed shameful statement to assert that "publishers do not reduce the prices" of non-copyright works "proportionately to the amounts of the royalties no longer payable to the former owners of the copyrights." Mr. Gwennet's own refutation of his words a few lines later ("they are of excellent value") does not excuse his apparent lack of knowledge of the history of popular publishing. Has he never heard of W. T. Stead and his penny books? Has he not heard of the Globe Library and the Oxford Poets? Of Everyman's Library and the old Cassell's Popular Reprints? Has he never seen the pre-first-world-war Albums of Classical Music published at prices which to-day will not buy three cigarettes? Or Payne's Miniature Scores, a series in which in 1885, according to Tovey, "most of the Haydn quartets were sixpence each, while Mozart and Beethoven ranged from ninepence to a shilling"? Up to the beginning of the second world war, with its disastrous shortage of paper, the classics were available at ridiculously cheap prices for the benefit and delight of all. It would not improve democracy to tax them. But in addition Mr. Gwennet does not seem to be aware of the nature of copyright law. I pass by the cheap taunt that a post-obit royalty is payable to heirs only because "artistic brain-workers are considered to be too brainless to provide for descendants": let Mr. Gwennet look at the wills of the authors and composers and see. Copyright law is an international protection. To tax works in the public domain in Great Britain only would be equivalent to having a purchase-tax on goods in Birmingham and none in Manchester. The distance between those cities is far greater than the mileage between Dover and Calais; but he would tax Shakespeare in the first and not in the second of these latter towns. I am reminded of

Catherine and Petkoff discussing the peace in *Arms and the Man*: she would have not signed peace until she had "annexed Serbia and made Prince Alexander Emperor of the Balkans." "I don't doubt it, my dear," replies Petkoff, "but I should have had to subdue the whole Austrian Empire first." Mr. Gwennet will, I fear, have to call another Berlin convention, and devise an entirely new international copyright law. He will not find it easy to persuade *L'Académie Française* that England may levy a ten per cent tax on Corneille and La Rochefoucauld. France, I suspect, will prefer to export her learning to the land of liberty (and dollars)—the United States of America.

Is it the intention of this tax to help or to hinder public libraries? I have been brought up to believe that the *Free Library* was one of our nobler British institutions. Or is it only my own private library for which, as a purchaser, I am to be mulcted? And would the tax be leviable on reprints of classics imported from abroad? I suppose so. And on exported copies of books printed here? It would seem to be absurd that Shakespeare printed in America should be free to Americans, but not Shakespeare printed in England, while Emerson printed there would remain free to them but taxable to us.

No, I have not studied the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* of March 17th, 1939. I do not think I need to. But let Mr. Gwennet rest assured that so long as I can hold a pen, so long as there is left a piece of paper to write on (and the outlook, I admit, is extremely unpromising at the moment), I shall, humbly, but I hope forcefully, follow the great example of Milton and oppose any scheme that, for whatever seemingly noble aim, imposes a tax upon past learning. If we *must* have state patronage, let us pay for it without lies, without insult to great men, dipping our hands into our pockets as men supporting "light and liberty and learning."

PERSONALITY CORNER

C. B. REES



IN these days of mass emotion there is a real danger of overdoing the worship of "big names" in music, especially of those who can readily attract the crowd by sensational methods. There are conductors who cannot fail to create "news," simply because they are either made that way, or have decided that that is the way they want it to be thought they were made. And the conductor's position is such that he is bound to catch the limelight. He has to stand alone, aloof, above the orchestra. It is impossible to ignore him even when you try; and this applies no less when he is bad than when he is good.

None the less, he gets rather too much attention; often much more than the composer. There are other musical practitioners who deserve our consideration who are too neglected, especially if they are first-rate without also being clever and cunning advertisers of themselves. I am thinking of violinists, 'cellists, wood-wind soloists—people who are usually taken for granted, except at the most concentrated level of publicity! So, without completely forgetting the maestros on the rostrum, which would be silly, if it were possible, let's give a thought for a change to the 'cellist. Take ANTHONY PINI.

He is not as well known to the *general* public as he ought to be. Musicians, of course, are aware of his gifts and his achievements. Born in Buenos Aires of a French father and a Scottish mother, he was first taught the 'cello by the former. His mother brought him and four other children to Scotland for a holiday when Carlos Antonio Pini (that is what he was christened) was eleven years old. Soon after their arrival in this country news came of the death of the father, and from then on, for some years, Tony's story is one of poverty and struggle. He began to play in cinemas, theatres, and cafés, saved £65 in these months to buy a 'cello

(it eventually cost him £80), and thus launched himself on a career which to-day finds him an acknowledged master of the instrument, at least among the discriminating.

I mention these brief biographical details because they are highly relevant to his musical outlook and personality. Without academic training at all, he graduated as an orchestral player in opera and symphony, became leader of the 'cellos when Beecham formed the London Philharmonic Orchestra, was 'cellist in the B.B.C.'s Salon Orchestra in the first three years or so of the second world war, then principal 'cellist of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. He is now free of all orchestral commitments and is devoting himself to solo work and chamber music. As a quartet player he has toured Europe and America with notable success.

It is not surprising that Pini is an individualist. You sense that when you first meet him. The hand-grip is powerful and confident: no slithering over the notes of introduction. His taut, tough figure, short and broad, is that of a man who hits back. Keen blue eyes search you as if you were a piece of music he wanted to turn inside out, in the friendliest but firmest fashion. He talks freely, with a clipped incisiveness made more noticeable by a slightly husky articulation.

Yes, definitely a fighter. If you think music is an effeminate business, spend a day with him. There is a Bakshi punch in his dialectical ripostes. He is no great respecter of persons, not at all of "positions." But for merit, knowledge, capacity he has the true artist's admiration. To greatness, to genius he gives an awed, humble devotion. Hear him on Bruno Walter, under whom, at Covent Garden, he played in *The Ring* and *Der Rosenkavalier*.

He is full of ideas about the art and science of 'cello-playing. No slavish copyist of any style, no blind worshipper of any technical system, he has evolved his own methods, and although it is not my province to discuss performances, I do not think I exaggerate when I say that he is a great master of the 'cello.

We do not need always to import instrumentalists in order to hear the works of the masters played authoritatively. There is every reason why we should be proud of our "English School" of

'cello-playing, as represented by Pini, Douglas Cameron, James Whitehead, John Shinebourne, and others.

No doubt Pini's ancestry explains his lively, vital, unconventional, and engaging character. He has the gift of the unexpected. And at the same time there is in him—and in his work—an English honesty and forthrightness, a look-you-in-the-eye approach that compels a respect as firm as his own stance when he lifts his bow in Elgar's *Concerto* at the Albert Hall.

The other evening at the Wigmore Hall I was made aware again of the (too often unconsidered) importance of the accompanist. The singer, the instrumental soloist get the limelight and the applause, sometimes not too well deserved. But the accompanist, however good, seldom gets a nod of recognition, no matter how considerable his contribution to the success of the occasion. True, his rôle is more or less in the background, but unless it were faithfully and even brilliantly played, many an artist would come to grief.

That is why it is so satisfying to see the bulky figure of GERALD MOORE walk on to the platform and take its place at the piano. Here is the apotheosis of the art that conceals art; here is a self-effacement that produces more positive results than many emphatic self-assertions; here is a "follower" who is also a leader.

"Gerald"—you really cannot call him "Mr. Moore" after the first two or three meetings—has a consuming, expansive friendliness. The powerful frame and the big, unlined, smooth and ingenuous face give little superficial indication of the highly sensitive artist—an artist who could have reached to topmost heights as a solo pianist. He takes his work with concentrated seriousness, and himself with concentrated gaiety. He will come towards you in the club or in the street, head thrust slightly forward, and as likely as not make some humorously "insulting" remark about your personality (only, of course, if he knows you). If you are quick enough to think of an equally scabrous reply—and you have to be very quick indeed with G. M.—his face will break into a massive smile, and he will enjoy your joke better than his own. Two minutes later he will be discussing the interpretation of *lieder* with a range of knowledge, a depth of understanding, and

a wealth of experience that would furnish a few professorships, with a good bit to spare.

If you have heard him talk on the air about the art of the accompanist, or read his excellent brochure on the subject (better to have done both), you will realise something of his extraordinary talent—a talent that in operation amounts to genius. He combines modesty with conviction. “No, no,” he will say, “not like that at all, old boy. Listen. I know it’s often done that way, but look . . .” And then you see—if you have any intelligence—the *difference* between playing for a singer and accompanying a singer. The finest artists pay him the highest tributes.

Gerald is one of the most amusing raconteurs I know. He tells his stories with a kind of half-hesitant urgency—just as he makes his points in an argument—that adds greatly to the effectiveness of both story and argument. There are few better aperitifs than half an hour with him before dinner. And the meal itself becomes a delightful experience in radiated bonhomie when he is present. It is fitting to his character, with its complete absence of fuss and pose and fabricated “temperament,” that the public scarcely hears more about him than that “Mr. Gerald Moore accompanied.” If one can rightly conceive of a virtuoso accompanist, Gerald is he. And his appreciations of the qualities of those to whom it is his lot to give so much so unobtrusively is as free and generous as his invitation to you to “come and have one.”

I like to see him come on to the platform, when I am alert enough to notice that he does. His quick, soft, cat-like walk from the wings; his serious, impassive mien at the piano; the effortless ease with which he overcomes the most difficult passages; the almost psychic rapport he establishes with his artists, no matter what their vagaries; and the swift and silent illusionism by which he evaporates from the scene—these are the stigmata of the “unashamed accompanist” who has made himself an institution in our musical life. I can see the twinkle in his eyes when he sees himself (if he ever does) described as an “institution,” and I can hear his mock-reproachful sally, “H’m, I suppose you think I look like a blooming institution. . . .”

BRAINS TRUST .

JULIAN HERBAGE



Q. Do you consider the ability to read scores is a very valuable aid to musical enjoyment?

A. I think the cultivation of any musical ability whatsoever tends towards an increased musical enjoyment. It tends to stimulate the creative and imaginative musical faculties. The person who can whistle a tune correctly has absorbed that tune so thoroughly into his consciousness that he can imaginatively re-create it. He must therefore have added to his musical enjoyment because he can carry music about in his mind and can re-create at least some part of it at any time that he feels so inclined.

The person who can really read a score—that is, can hear it in his mind through perusing the written notes—at least adds to the scope of his musical enjoyment, and possibly even to the intensity of his musical experience. But there are not many people who can read a score in an armchair and get a clear picture of every sound in their imagination. There are many more people who can prop up a score on a piano, and by a mechanical process of “reading” the notes, let the piano do the work of reconstructing the music. This latter type of score-reading, which is dependent on a purely technical ability to press down a certain key on the piano when a certain note is written in the score, does not add much to one’s capacity for musical enjoyment, because it is the instrument which is really doing the work of musical reconstruction.

I have known many singers who cannot sight-read at all, and even some who are incapable of learning a part unless an accompanist or coach dins it into them note by note on the piano. Among the latter are many fine artists who, once they have learnt their rôles, interpret them with such musical understanding that they would seem to disprove the theory of musical enjoyment having anything to do with the ability to read music. When one

realises, too, that it is only for about a thousand years that music has been written down at all, the score-reader's claim to superior musical enjoyment seems a little far-fetched.

The printed note is simply an aid to musical performance, and incidentally quite an inadequate one as regards those subtle qualities in which the spirit of the music really lies. Musical enjoyment depends largely on what the interpreter adds through his own musical feeling and intuition to the notes he performs. I would say that score-reading could only add greatly to our musical enjoyment if we are capable of hearing in our imagination a more perfect interpretation than we are likely to hear in actual performance. Music is the art of sound, not the science of hieroglyphics.

Q. Whilst I do not say Tchaikovsky is the greatest of composers, why is he held, apparently, in such low esteem by the so-called musical intelligentsia?

A. In answering this question I must obviously make "intelligentsia" the operative word. It is a word not to be found in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, but not, I imagine, because the type is rare. I take it to be a person who imagines himself well endowed with intellect, rather than intelligence, and scornful of those poor weak mortals who are swayed by their emotions. Such an individual would naturally be antipathetic towards Tchaikovsky, who wrote of his Pathetic Symphony, "while composing it in my mind, I often wept bitterly." The clue to Tchaikovsky's music is its subjective self-dramatisation. By subjectively and emotionally projecting his own personality into his music he achieved a unique intensity of self-expression—even, some would say, to the verge of self-pity. This, by the way, seems a typically Russian characteristic, and can be found in many of the characters created by Chekhov. Tchaikovsky's passages of hectic excitement followed by nostalgic melancholy would appear shallowly theatrical if they were not emotionally sincere, and as the intelligentsia distrust the emotions, they hold Tchaikovsky's music in low esteem.

Tchaikovsky's own opinion of his brother-musicians helps to strengthen this attitude. He repeatedly expressed his antipathy to the music of Brahms and Wagner. He once declared that Delibes's

Sylvia Ballet was "a thousand times finer" than Wagner's *Ring*. After hearing *Götterdämmerung* at the newly created Bayreuth festival he confessed that as its last chords died away he felt as if he had been let out of prison. It is therefore not remarkable that the intelligentsia disregard Tchaikovsky's superb craftsmanship, his unerring sense of symphonic drama, his brilliant yet simple orchestration and his instinctive sense of climax. These qualities have little of the intellectual or even spiritual. They are primarily emotional, and therefore to be treated by the intelligentsia with suspicion. Tchaikovsky, too, was a superb and prolific melodist, and like all prolific melodists wrote both bad and good tunes. The bad ones lay him open to the charge of vulgarity, and to the intelligentsia no greater crime exists. It is far better, in their eyes, to be boring, but this latter vice was one which Tchaikovsky did all in his power to avoid.

Q. Who, in your opinion, is the most important musical figure alive to-day?

A. The intelligent concert-goer. The creation of music has always been dependent on his patronage. In the early days music was used by the witch-doctor to terrify and impress his tribe. Later it became an essential in the ritual of the Church, in the trappings of Majesty, and in the encouragement of marital pursuits. Music's early history was almost entirely functional, and it existed, not for itself, but because it served a purpose. Later, when it became an æsthetic entertainment for its own sake, its history was dictated by its aristocratic patronage. In the impoverished world of to-day there are no longer any princely patrons. The duty of patronage has democratically fallen on the concert-goer, who now dictates the policy and economics of concert-giving. If the concert-goer wants bad music indifferently performed, he will get it. If he insists on good performance and enterprise, it will be forthcoming.

For this reason I consider the concert-goer the most important musical figure alive to-day. Music's future is in his hands. What composer or performer can achieve recognition unless his art is heard? And if it is not heard, it might just as well not exist. But why, you may ask, should I put the appreciator before the

creator? Both are surely equally important. I would answer that music is going through a period of revolution and experiment. We are not living in an age of great classic tradition. I would be brave enough to assert that there is no Beethoven in our midst. But on the creative side of music there are many voices clamouring for recognition. A new musical art, trying to attune itself to the new world, is being attempted. Therefore at no time could the audience have more power for good or evil, for the advancement or negation of the art of music. Much that has been created in the past has fallen by the wayside, not through lack of merit, but through lack of support. At the present time, in this "unprecise, irrational, emotional, and utilitarian world," the concert-goer holds the heaviest responsibility in music. To him we look for its future health.

Q. Do you think, in time, that instruments with electrically produced notes might be incorporated into the making of serious music?

A. Of course I think so, because it has already happened. I will merely quote Honegger's *Joan of Arc at the Stake*, recently broadcast by the B.B.C., in which use is made of an electronic instrument called the "Ondes Martenot." This instrument exploits in artistic manner the principles of the thermionic valve. There are two methods of playing it—by means of a keyboard, or by an endless tape which makes such effects as *vibrato* and *glissando* possible. As in all electronic instruments the tone quality can be adjusted by altering the relative proportions of the harmonics, and pressure on a finger-button controls both volume and attack. In his score Honegger has ingeniously exploited the expressive and descriptive qualities of this instrument, and has blended it skilfully with the other instruments in his large score. Particularly effective is his descriptive use of it to suggest the crackling of flames and the howling of a dog, but its expressive use in the last pages of his score has an uncanny emotional atmosphere.

The late Francis Galpin, in his *Textbook of European Musical Instruments*, ends with a chapter devoted to this subject. His last words on the electronic instrument are prophetic. "Undoubtedly it is still in its infancy," he writes, "but the unknown tonal effects

and the mysterious charm which lie hidden within its unexplored realm may in the years to come place this latest form of sound production in the forefront of our musical instruments."

Q. What are the meanings of the words "classical" and "romantic" as applied to music?

A. The lowbrow, of course, divides all music into "classical" and "jazz," the former being the music that bores him, and the latter being the music which gives him a kick. The average music-lover would probably reply, "Music like Bach's is classical, and music like Tchaikovsky's is romantic."

This latter definition, being a half-truth, is perhaps the more misleading. Though at certain times creative artists are predominantly more classic than romantic, the words do not refer to eras, but rather to a manner of creative approach. Furthermore, most great composers combine in greater or less measure the classic and romantic qualities.

A classical composer is one who stresses the qualities of construction, of the whole being more important than the part, of the emotions being ruled by the intellect, of the inspiration being logically presented. He normally lives in a period of urbanity—that is, a period when the stress is laid on civilised society, the acceptance of tradition, and co-operation towards an accepted mode and ideal of life and thought.

The romantic composer revolts against order and proportion, giving free and defiant rein to his imagination and emotion. He shrinks from urbanity, preferring individualism and uncultivated nature. To him the sole quality of inspiration is its spontaneity, and he is not afraid to sacrifice proportion in pursuance of episode. He normally lives at a time when classical traditions have become hidebound, or have lost their power of expression.

Both the romantic and the classic principles are essential to creative endeavour, the first opening up new fields, and the second consolidating the advance. They are dangerous labels, however, unless one is merely dealing in generalities.

NEW BOOKS



The Technique of the Modern Orchestra. Ch.-M. Widor, with an Appendix by Gordon Jacob. Joseph Williams. 30s. net.

"GREAT importance seems now attached to the art of Instrumentation, which was unknown at the commencement of last century; and the advance of which, sixty years ago, many persons who passed for sincere friends of Music endeavoured to prevent." So wrote Berlioz, a century ago, in his *Traité de l'Instrumentation*. He was writing of a youthful art, an art only just beginning to be conscious of its richly expressive possibilities. Yet such was the prophetic clarity of his vision that most of his treatise remains as significant to-day as at the time when it was written. New orchestral effects have since been devised, new mechanical improvements have been made to many instruments, but the principles expounded by Berlioz still remain true of the modern orchestra as we now know it.

As a piece of imaginative literature Berlioz's treatise is unique among textbooks, and possesses a Wellsian sense of prophecy. Writing of the saxophone, which had only recently been invented, Berlioz declared: "Saxophones may figure with advantage in all kinds of music. . . . Clever composers will hereafter derive wondrous effects from saxophones associated with the clarinet family, or introduced in other combinations which it would be rash to attempt foreseeing." To-day, in Sigurd Rascher, we have a virtuoso for whom several composers have written concertos. Already in *L'Arlésienne* Bizet had proved the effectiveness of this instrument as a soloist, and recently composers have introduced groups of saxophones into their orchestral scores.

In general, Berlioz's approach to the question of instrumentation was to describe not only what had been done, but also what might be achieved. He was both an expert and a visionary, and his treatise therefore remains a stimulus to the creative imagination. It was a bold step for Widor to supply a supplement to

Berlioz's work, even if his object was merely to bring its technical information "up to date." Widor wisely described his book by the title *Technique de l'Orchestre Moderne*, thus confining it mainly to a summary of the mechanical improvements and development of instrumental technique which had occurred during the sixty years since Berlioz's treatise had been published. He writes as a sensitive exponent of current orchestral practice rather than as a reformer or seer. He strikes out on a line of his own only to defend his beloved instrument, the organ, from an imaginary attack which he feels is inherent in Berlioz's remarks. This quixotic gesture at least provides the most inspired and readable part of his book. It should certainly be studied by all organists, particularly those who are interested in performing the organ music of the eighteenth century and earlier.

Widor's book was first published in 1904, and appeared shortly afterwards in an English translation made by Edward Suddard. Joseph Williams, the original English publishers, have recently issued a revised edition of the work, which contains also a new Appendix by Dr. Gordon Jacob. In a foreword to this Appendix, Dr. Jacob concisely outlines his objectives. "Where the latest practice and methods," he writes, "have been found to conflict with Widor's statements, this has been pointed out, but the greater part of the Appendix has been devoted to the use of the various instruments by composers of recent times." No doubt it was a praiseworthy idea to republish Widor's text with as little alteration as possible, but it is somewhat confusing, for instance, to read in the main body of the work about a bass clarinet in A, and later to learn from the Appendix that the instrument no longer exists. There might at least have been a cross-reference system to show which of Widor's statements are now obsolete. Yet parts of Widor's text have obviously been tampered with: the original edition could hardly have contained references to Shostakovich and Britten, neither of whom was born when it was first published.

It is also a little disappointing to find no musical examples in the Appendix. As Dr. Jacob rightly remarks, "the Appendix will be of little use unless the scores of the works of modern composers are studied carefully and in detail." Not every student has access

to a large library of modern scores, and a few quotations would have been invaluable. Berlioz wisely included long excerpts from what were in his day some of the most advanced orchestral scores. His descriptive introductions to these quotations provide real insight into the art of instrumentation. It is hardly sufficient to say that "Vaughan Williams uses soft-muted Trombones in the slow movement of his Symphony No. 4 in F minor" without giving the reader any idea of the effect they produce.

On the other hand, many of Dr. Jacob's practical hints are first-class, as one would expect from such an accomplished craftsman with solid achievement in every branch of orchestration. His "Conclusion" is a concise summary of many years of practical experience, and his paragraphs on the preparation of manuscript orchestral parts will save beginners many heartaches at rehearsal. Many veterans could well take to heart his final sentence that "The composer is therefore wise who regards this matter of parts as one of prime importance." Even with the best of copyists, all that is written in the score does not invariably find its way into the individual parts, and both conductor and orchestra resent wasting time at rehearsal on work which could have been undertaken in the study.

Perhaps, in these days of austerity, it is a little unfair to lodge a complaint on the subject of book-production. Yet it is difficult to escape the impression that Messrs. Joseph Williams have based their layout on the plan of, say, a glorified Ocarina tutor of Edwardian days. The main type-fount is characteristic of such classics of yesterday, in which the Roman type seems to bear little physical or artistic relation to the Italic. There are several misprints; for example in the spelling of "Honneger." Also the reviser might have cleared up some conflicting uses of musical terminology. Neither the editor's nor the publisher's hand seems to have been exerted with sufficient firmness or imagination. One gets the effect of a *réchauffé* dish rather than of a freshly cooked meal. These points may seem unimportant, but they breed a lack of confidence. More important, perhaps, is the fact that whereas Berlioz wrote a work of inspiration, Widor, with his "complete lists of shakes and tremolos for the wood-wind,"

produced a slightly indigestible textbook which the present revision has scarcely made more appetising.

JULIAN HERBAGE

Piano Playing: A Practical Method. James Ching. Bosworth.
12s. 6d. net.

Though there is much of absorbing interest to all music-lovers in James Ching's new book on pianoforte technique, it is more likely to appeal to the professional teacher than to those amateurs—"the countless men and women who have no wish to be celebrated pianists but who want to be able to express something of themselves through piano-playing"—to whom it is dedicated. The amateur pianist can hardly be expected to have either the time or the knowledge to balance the rights and wrongs of the controversy on the subject of Matthay's relaxationist theories to which considerable space has been given.

The style of the book, too, makes it by no means easy reading, for the writer has unfortunately published it in its original lecture form, instead of rewriting and compressing it. The reiteration of "Ladies and Gentlemen" every few paragraphs is irritating to read, and sentences whose rhetoric may sound convincing enough when delivered to an audience, become involved and long-winded when seen in print. Ching has broken away from Matthay in his theories of technique, but he still follows him in his talent for verbose writing.

He advocates his own theories with the fervour and sincerity of a prophet, and has been criticised for so strongly repudiating beliefs which he once held. But surely Matthay gained his thirty years' dominance over English-speaking teachers by similar forceful denunciations of his predecessors—coupled, of course, with his artistic integrity. It is clear that anyone who formulates a new theory attacks other thinkers in the same line by inference, even if he refrains from verbal assault. Matthay did not hesitate to describe his critics as "fools" and in so doing invited retort of similar character, an invitation which Ching accepts in lively fashion and backs with convincing argument.

I do not entirely agree with Mr. Ching when he says that "at the end of the last century the teaching methods (or rather the lack of them) resulted in the general use of a particularly high degree of excessive tension." He considers that reaction to this false teaching prepared the ground for the phenomenal growth of Matthay's relaxationist theories. My own experience as a piano student in the '80s was that constant attention was given to avoid tension. My master (a pupil of Clara Schumann's) was most particular in this respect, and a sharp tap upwards under the wrist was sufficient to call my attention to the fault if I showed any signs of stiffening in a difficult passage.

Nineteenth-century teachers approached technique through the practice of music, but the tendency now seems to be in the opposite direction, and to such an extent that it may sometimes be questioned whether music is or is not the object. Thus we are told "the ability to make the bodily movements involved in operating the piano keys efficiently is not to be gained by any reference to any questions of art, but only by reference to applied science, to the established facts of psychology, physiology, and mechanics." Again, "the technical skill involved in piano-playing is no different, at least in principle, from that involved in operating a typewriter." This omits to take into consideration the fact that a deaf typist might be perfectly efficient, whereas a deaf pianist, no matter what his technical attainments, would be unthinkable. However, it is not at all an uncommon experience to hear a virtuoso who is so obsessed with obtaining mechanical perfection that he remains deaf to the æsthetic requirements of the music. Psychology as a science was in its infancy in the nineteenth century and as such did not trouble teachers; they troubled as little also about physiology, which they left to the doctors. Their teaching was founded on their own experience as pianists and musicians. That their methods were not negligible is proved by the long line of famous pianists who flourished before any of these elaborate treatises appeared. Their appearance is difficult to explain away unless by some such sophistry as used by Matthay. In a famous and extraordinarily egotistical passage he says: "Geniuses in the past have . . . subconsciously realised the true processes of tech-

nique, else there never would have been any great players before the appearance of the *Act of Touch*." It follows that players trained on relaxationist methods should by now dominate the world. Do they?

On page 48 of *Piano Playing* we read "all the bodily processes of technique must, as far as possible, be controlled subconsciously and automatically. It is, indeed, hardly to be questioned that the ultimate aim of all technical practice is to eliminate the necessity for any conscious attention whatever to the processes of technique." I am in entire agreement with this, and yet the object of most methods of technique (Ching's included) is to make the student aware of the particular muscles controlling action, an awareness which to many must appear useless when through practice it has to become subconscious before the effortless ease of a perfect performance is attained. In our daily lives we perform countless movements quite as complicated as those required for pianoforte-playing without having any clear mental picture of the muscular actions involved, and at the same time without the stimulus which the rhythmic element in music provides. With regard to the latter, sufficient consideration is seldom allowed for the nervous excitability that may be caused by musical influences and their reactions on muscular control. And yet it must be in the experience of every musician that the impulse of a musical performance will carry you safely over technical difficulties which in cold blood seem insurmountable.

There is much in James Ching's *Piano Playing* in addition to the mere technical side that is of value to the serious music student, whether amateur or professional, while adherents of the so-called Relaxationist School are bound to study its shrewd arguments if they are to ward off its attacks.

But the ideal book on pianoforte technique remains to be written. I imagine it will consist of two pages of simple instructions, the rest of the book will consist of blank pages except for the one instruction on which all theorists agree—PRACTISE.

This one word covers the beginning and end of all action.

ERNEST HAYWOOD

Contrasts: The Arts and Religion. Alec Robertson. S.C.M. Press. 6s. net.

In the foreword to *Contrasts*, Alec Robertson states that he intends to try to show "that all great art is basically religious." Instead, however, of the promised "series of antitheses" we are offered some works of poets, musicians, and painters (and a cathedral), the majority of which are already generally accepted as basically religious.

The chapter on music, for example, describes *Messiah* and *St. Matthew Passion*, the two works that anyone with a smattering of musical knowledge would probably pick if asked to name two great religious works. How then is it possible, as Mr. Robertson appears to expect, to deduce that *all* great music is religious? The lack of enterprise here is the more surprising considering the wide musical knowledge of the author.

It would also have been more conclusive, surely, though far more difficult, to have attempted to compare Milton with Swinburne, Verlaine, or Wilde as regards religious content, especially as Wilde declared that "an ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style." This section contains a good synopsis of *Paradise Lost*.

It is to be assumed that Mr. Robertson does not read his proofs carefully. Surely there can be no other reason for the mistakes in the chapter on painters (El Greco, Blake, Van Gogh). He states that El Greco died in 1647 (apparently at the age of a hundred and six), whereas he really died in 1614. *Contrasts* also states that William Blake was born in 1857—"a little over two hundred years after El Greco's death"—though we are told two pages later of an entry in Blake's notebook dated 1807. In actual fact Blake was born in 1757, under one hundred and fifty years after El Greco's death. The date of Van Gogh's birth is given correctly (1853), but he is said to have attained the age of forty-seven; actually he killed himself in 1890, aged thirty-seven. Again, how much more interesting if Mr. Robertson had attempted to show us the religious significance of Degas, Monet, or any of the other artists of the "art for art's sake" movement!

The concluding chapter is where Mr. Robertson intends "to gather up the loose ends and face squarely the problems that have been raised." Admittedly, it is here that the first real antithesis appears. The author quotes Goethe: "It is merely the general human interest in religious material that may make it a good subject for art," and counters this by the very controversial generalisation: "the artist, whether he knows it or not, is consulting God in making a work of art." He follows this unsupported statement with a brilliant flash of deductive reasoning: "It follows that all great art is religious art." Later comes: "human reason, the poorest instrument of those man carries on his dolorous journey," and I comment only that the journey must be dolorous without it. Mr. Robertson says let "the beauty of mystery descend again upon the lovely poetic dogmas of the Church." To the lay mind, mystery certainly surrounds the last chapter of *Contrasts*.

It is only fair to say that this book may be appreciated by those already of "the Faithful" as a means of adding a gloss to otherwise unsubstantiated arguments, but it is highly improbable that it will convince or convert anyone else. Those coming to the book with an unprejudiced mind will find that those parts, and there are many, that need strong logical supports rest on ecclesiastical and mystical matchwood. Statements like "it is indeed harder for the philosopher and the scientist to enter the kingdom of heaven than the artist" are unexplained, or are they inexplicable?

This book may be "A Plea that Religious Art can, at times, be Great"; but "Contrasts"? No, Mr. Robertson!

GEORGE F. KNIGHT

The Orchestra in the South. Ralph Hill, with illustrations by John Vickers. Shirley Press, Hove: 2s. 6d. net.

There is some plain speaking by the editor of this magazine about the orchestral situation, in London particularly, in his admirably written brochure *Orchestra in the South*, attractively produced by the Shirley Press for the Brighton Philharmonic Society. He traces the decline since the war (and because of the

war) in the standard of orchestral-playing in the capital, pointing out that this is all the more lamentable as it occurs at a time when conditions were never more favourable for the best performances. "Largely through the cumulative effect of twenty years of broadcast music and gramophone records the interest of the public in fine music has surpassed the most sanguine expectations."

But orchestral concerts are costly, and so rehearsals are cut to the bone, hackneyed works fill the programmes, and a purely commercial outlook tends to dominate our music-making. Culturally, as Mr. Hill vigorously asserts, concerts given in these conditions have no value at all.

The solution to music's economic troubles is to be found in regional orchestras, of the kind now flourishing in Manchester (the Hallé), Birmingham (City of Birmingham Orchestra), and Liverpool (Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra).

Brighton has nobly emulated these examples, and to-day, under the able conductorship of Herbert Menges, the Southern Philharmonic Orchestra is making musical history in the south. It has grown from the "Symphonic String Players" in 1925, into the Southern Philharmonic Orchestra, founded in 1945, extended now entirely to professional players, ninety per cent of whom come from conveniently situated London. It has already achieved much and the possibilities that lie before it are great and exciting, if . . .

Yes, there is an "if," not so much the "if" of public support and enthusiasm, for that is eagerly available, but the more intractable "if" of adequate municipal backing. [I shall have something pertinent to say on this matter in the next number!—Editor.]

Brighton and the south need this orchestra to minister to the dormant musical needs of a large and populous area, and I sincerely hope that the people who want the best music (and are proud of the S.P.O.) will see to it that their desires are not thwarted by nincompoopery dressed in a little brief, ill-fitting authority.

Orchestra in the South deserves a wide reading public (and a growing listening one).

C. B. REES

NEW MUSIC

ROBIN HULL



THE most astounding revolution that has ever taken place in the musical life of our country is the recruitment of over four million people as *consistent* listeners to chamber music. This feat has been accomplished by the radio feature, "Music in Miniature," in the face of every prediction to the contrary. The odds against success were formidable. The very mention of chamber music has long been anathema to "the plain man," not least because he has seldom taken the slightest trouble to discover what it has to offer. It was a stroke of psychological genius to realise that the British public would willingly listen to music of this kind provided that no one mentioned its nature. But the triumph of these programmes is due to much more than an enticing title, or even to the extraordinary skill shown in their construction. The thirty minutes of "Music in Miniature" seems to be, for most people, exactly the right length. No branch of composition asks for more intensive listening. The concentrated attention demanded from the listener by a full-length recital of three string quartets is one which any professional musician of experience will be the first to acknowledge. And such recitals are no hardship, of course, for the seasoned concert-goer. It would be futile snobbery to look askance at those who, though willing and adventurous pilgrims, are less far advanced on the road. Their needs are best met by programmes of intelligent brevity. The first step is to win and hold their allegiance. There is no reason whatever to doubt their capability of proceeding, in due time, to more solid and substantial diet.

Another timely lesson pointed by "Music in Miniature" is that works of every period can be successfully offered on equal terms. That is a fact which the concert world in general has yet to learn. It has always seemed to me little short of insanity to

segregate present-day music, and I hope most sincerely that so fine a composition as Benjamin Frankel's Quartet No. 2 (Augener, 5s. 6d.) will escape this absurd system of isolation. It is not merely that Frankel's score is admirably suited to its medium, written with lucidity, and informed by a brilliant technique—those are qualities to be expected from any capable composer. What makes this Quartet so remarkable is its evidence of a forceful and original mind, gifted with an exceptional degree of creative imagination, and distinguished by a profound feeling for beauty. Each of the five movements is concise, but not cramped, in realisation of a taut design. And Frankel reconciles this unity with a cogent range and variety of mood. It is some time since I received a score whose individuality has struck me as so outstanding—that is to say, in the work of a composer who is relatively new to me. A comparable instance (as regards strength of character) may be found among the finest pages of Kerreth Quinn-Kinney, whose career was ended so tragically by the late war, and whose art might well have been lost but for the vigilant custody of his manuscripts by an intimate friend. No doubt it is merely a matter of time before Quinn-Kinney's music becomes more widely known—it would not surprise me to hear that his piano pieces, at least, are under consideration for the Third Programme—though it must be added, in common justice, that the composer's aloofness from self-advertisement goes far to explain why he received but negligible recognition during his life-time.

Strength of character, too, can be confidently expected from the music of Alan Rawsthorne. His String Quartet (O.U.P., 4s. 6d.), written in 1939, and consisting of a theme and six variations, is not less individual for being easy to the ear. These pages flow agreeably without any surrender to laxity of thought or pattern. Their buoyancy owes much to Rawsthorne's gift for fresh, spontaneous invention in which a light touch never deviates into shallow expression. The theme itself is straightforward and attractive, succinct in its material, and an effective starting-point for argument. Each variation genuinely advances this thesis besides affording well-judged contrasts of pace and mood. The composer reveals, once again, that true sense of

development so essential if a score is to be convincing in its sum as well as satisfactory in detail. It is clear that a first-rate interpretation must depend even more upon sympathy with the music itself than upon the excellent technique of the players. Neither this work nor Frankel's Quartet No. 2 are for executants below the rank of expert artists, but each may be expected to attract and hold widespread attention among listeners. A paramount requisite is, of course, the chance to hear an adequate number of performances.

An appreciation of Vaughan Williams's String Quartet in A minor (O.U.P., 6s. 6d.) depends upon more complex factors than any likely to concern the two works just mentioned. There are few composers whose music can make stricter demands from listeners on grounds of temperamental affinity. His most perceptive admirers are precisely those capable of realising that this affinity cannot be ordered at will. The matter is beyond compromise. A work such as Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony can afford either a supreme experience of his genius or an ordeal of excruciating boredom. It would be sheer arrogance to assume that those incapable of responding to this Symphony must be wholly destitute of musicianship. They may be, and often are, cultured and appreciative listeners to other composers whose music offers an experience no less supreme in quality. But one is entitled to regret that Vaughan Williams means little or nothing to them, and to treat with extreme reserve the views that they may express about his art. No great harm is done if a listener has the discernment to recognise any "blind spot" in his appreciative powers. It is a critical blunder of the first order to attempt a rationalisation of this "blind spot" by faulting the composer. The Quartet in A minor raises such an issue in an acute form. Its four movements embrace some of Vaughan Williams's most personal utterances. Those who are fully at home with him in this vein are likely to be enthralled by the virility of the Prelude, the deeply-felt lyricism of the Romance, the nimble Scherzo, and an Epilogue that combines simplicity with the apotheosis of meditative beauty. Their verdict may be that the Quartet takes its place among the most treasured pages of this great composer.

THE BALLET RAMBERT

celebrates its 21st birthday

"Now that we are twenty-one,"—said Madame Rambert after the first night of her company's season at Sadler's Wells in May and June—"we will forget our age and have no more birthdays." Indeed, the company retains the pioneering spirit that made its reputation in youth by breaking new ground for a British company with a year's tour of Australia and New Zealand, for which it sailed in August.

Marie Rambert founded the company in 1926 with a handful of dancers, and now, in 1947, with a company of forty, she can look back on twenty-one years of continuous hard work and great achievement. Work that has amply justified her faith in the future of British ballet; achievement in bringing to the fore many of the outstanding dancers and choreographers of the British Isles—such as Pearl Argyle, Frederick Ashton, Harold Turner, Sally Gilmour, Walter Gore, and Andrée Howard.



Madame Rambert takes a "curtain" with the company.



Walter Gore's Birthday Ballet
"PLAISANCE"

Walter Gore has been with Madame Rambert for sixteen years and is choreographer to the company. He has five ballets in the present repertoire and his latest, "Plaisance," is his twenty-first birthday gift to Madame Rambert. The ballet had a great success at Sadler's Wells, and was afterwards televised by the company from Alexandra Palace.

Walter Gore in "Plaisance."





Light and grace : décor and costumes are by Harry Cordwell.



"Plaisance" is set to Rossini's music arranged by Humphrey Searle, who is seen here going through the score with Walter Gore.



Annette Chappell with Walter Gore.

Danced to the sparkle of Rossini, the ballet gives particular opportunity to the younger members of the company.





"The Sailor's Return," which had its première at Sadler's Wells on June 2nd, is an important new work with choreography, scenery, and costumes by Andrée Howard with music specially composed by Arthur Oldham. As in her "Lady into Fox," this ballet is again based on a David Garnett work, with Sally Gilmour in the principal part. In this picture Andrée Howard is seen fitting Sally Gilmour with her costume.



Sally Gilmour as the sailor's West African bride, Tulip, whom he brings to England and sets up as the landlady of an inn—"The Sailor's Return." When her husband is killed Tulip finds herself alone and friendless and forced to work as a servant in the inn where formerly she was mistress.



As "Giselle."

Sally Gilmour, the ballerina of the company, had a personal triumph in the Ballet Rambert's first complete "Giselle" in July last year. Cyril W. Beaumont, great historian and authority of classical ballet, was so impressed with her performance that he asked that a wreath of flowers from her head-dress should be put into a collection of Pavlova's and other great dancers' costumes.





Joyce Graeme, a dancer of great versatility, in a study in contrasts—(left) as the strident Mrs. Punch and (below) as the cold, imperious Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis in "Giselle."



"A white flame of cruelty."



Sally Gilmour with Walter Gore in his "Mr. Punch."



John Gilpin, a rising young star of seventeen, who has danced all the leading junior rôles in the company's repertoire, with whom he has been for two years. He was well known as a child actor on stage, screen, and radio.



John Gilpin with Annette Chappell, the youngest of the Ballet Rambert's young stars. She has begun to take leading rôles and her dancing attracted much favourable comment during the London season.





As the Swan Princess in "Swan Lake."

Belinda Wright at seventeen shows a great understanding of classical ballet and her technique promises a ballerina of great quality. Her portrayal of the Swan Princess is her finest rôle to date.

*The practice that
makes perfection.*



This gallery of stars of the Ballet Rambert would not be complete without a picture of May Mellor, the wardrobe mistress, whose work helps to make all else possible. She has been with the Ballet Rambert for twelve years and her deep affection for the members of the company is wholeheartedly reciprocated. The first call as the dancers come off the stage is usually for —“May !”

The Sonata for Solo Viola (1938), by Elisabeth Lutyens (Lengnick, price unmarked), seems to involve less far-reaching considerations. It would be hard to discover a work more conclusively removed from that era when the worst excesses of late-romanticism might be compared to a gigantic rat, horribly engorged with blood, motionless from repletion, but capable of being stirred to activity at any moment by its obscene feast. Nothing could be more natural or inevitable than a recoil from this rodent, and the main tendency during the 1930s was for composers to hasten as far as possible in the opposite direction. Miss Lutyens is among those who have found a significant field for exploration, and her Sonata provides further evidence of its fruitful soil. The music clearly proceeds from an incisive and genuinely creative mind, resolved upon the terse expression of ideas but maintaining economy without any lapse into exiguous material. It would be a mistake to infer that so keen a technical command has been concentrated here for the purpose of a *tour de force*. The invention is essentially suited to the medium of solo viola, and would lose its point by being set out in different terms. Though the Sonata must be regarded as an inviolable entity, its subject-matter has admitted of division into two sections—*Allegro ma non troppo*—*Adagio*—but these directions are not parochial in their application. The work as a whole shows admirable flexibility of pace and mood, and its consistently reasoned address disposes of any doubt that undue demands are made upon the virtuosity of the soloist.

A point in common between the works so far reviewed is the expert level of capability required for their performance. The *Elegy* for String Orchestra, by Gordon Phillips (Lengnick, price unmarked), is on simpler lines, and open to a much wider range of players, though their proficiency must reach a creditable standard. This short piece (eight minutes) strikes me as very well done. The music is truly elegiac, sensitive and deeply felt, as well as impressive in its lyrical beauty. It is written with an admirable grasp of what is suitable for this medium, and a sustained intensity of style proves no hindrance to clarity of texture. I am not entirely happy about the gradation of interpretative markings.

These are detailed almost to a point of fussiness, leaving little to the intelligence of the executants, and my impression is that the whole work could have been scaled without recourse to triple *forte* and *piano*. Such instructions may offer too open an invitation to the conductor's pencil. Apart from this matter, about which there is no need to exaggerate, the *Elegy* is set out with unquestionable skill, and its addition to the repertoire will be welcome.

It would have been agreeable to give a larger place to continental music during the past year, and I had confidently expected that its claims would far exceed the space at my disposal. An interesting point is the extraordinary paucity of music from abroad—though there may be a vast quantity of new works available in the countries of their origin—and the huge spate of British publications offered for review. There has been no question of laying a deliberate and exclusive emphasis upon music by our native composers, but a very real difficulty in trying to keep pace with their output. Most of these works have been of a quality about whose excellence few well-informed musicians would seek a dispute. It seems a fair conclusion that British composers are at least holding their own, and even possible that the leadership has passed to them on grounds of sheer merit.

THE RECORD COLLECTOR

ALEC ROBERTSON



IN quitting this particular pitch, with the present issue of the PENGUIN MUSIC MAGAZINE I should like to devote some space to the 1946-47 record catalogues which have recently been published. I notice, in passing, that the H.M.V. catalogue now includes a list of composers in chronological order, with a key to their nationalities, years of birth and death, and grouped in the centuries to which they belong. This is an excellent idea and much to be preferred to the alphabetical list in the Columbia catalogue, which, incidentally, is rather too inclusive. Beethoven is followed by Belton, and Haydn by Hazelhurst, and so forth. I doubt if many people would be likely to look up Belton or Hazelhurst. The list of works under composers' names in both catalogues is apt to mislead. Thus, on hopefully looking for the Partita in B flat for clavier by Bach, one finds that only two movements have been recorded, both of which are alphabetically listed, one correctly, the other vaguely: but no indication is given that these are the only movements recorded under the heading, in bold type, of "Partita." And though, of course, anyone who knows his Bach would not be puzzled by two "No. 1" Partitas, in different keys, being listed under the general heading, it would have been easy to indicate after the key the instrument for which each was written.

On the whole, however, these two catalogues are reasonably clear, and it is no easy job, as I know, to compile them satisfactorily.

The Parlophone catalogue is a sad reminder of the deletions it has suffered, and it is strange to find exactly two symphonies listed under that heading—Beethoven's Fifth and Schubert's *Unfinished*. Not a single record of those glorious singers, Meta Seinemeyer and Lotte Lehmann, are left in this catalogue, and

very few of Conchita Supervia. Decca, for their part, have yet to produce a catalogue to supersede the dim-looking affair which has done duty for so long, and I hope that it will be worthy of their recent fine recordings.

Let us consider some of the omissions in these catalogues, which reveal themselves fully only when one begins to analyse the lists of works that are available. Not many of us have the time to hunt round the second-hand shops for badly needed records that are not to be found in the catalogues, or have the money to buy any that we may find. I am not, moreover, thinking of collector's pieces, but of standard works. A great many people use the gramophone for purposes of illustration when talking about music, and many more for their own private studies; but unless they are going to broadcast and have access to the huge B.B.C. library their position is likely to be very difficult. And even if they can draw on a good record library, there are still many unfilled gaps. Take Bach and Handel. There is, it is true, an American recording of the *St. Matthew Passion*—an unsatisfactory one—but if we limit ourselves to the English catalogues the position is grim. There is exactly one soprano aria to be had!

There are now two complete recordings of *Messiah* and H.M.V. will shortly issue yet another, but Bach's great work still remains to be done. I am told that a fairly recent German recording is in existence, but the *St. Matthew Passion* has become so familiar to us in its English translation that it is urgently necessary to make it available in that translation.

One of the works most likely to convert the ordinary listener to Bach's keyboard music is the B flat Partita of which I spoke above, a lovely and most tuneful work from start to finish: but of this, as we have seen, only two movements have been recorded.

Every aspiring pianist plays the Chromatic Fantasia, yet for this you will look in vain in the current catalogues: and surely the "48," the Musicians' Old Testament, should be available apart from the Society issue. The representation of organ music is, with the exception of the Schweitzer albums, meagre in the extreme, but, in men like C. H. Trevor, Ralph Downes, and Geraint Jones, we have, in this country alone, three fine Bach

players who are also scholars, and some use should be made of them.

There is only one recording, and that an old one, of two of the most popular choral-preludes—transcribed for the piano—and no recording at all of such a beautiful air as “Schlummert ein” (from the cantata *Es ist genug*), which used always to move profoundly the Queen’s Hall Prom audience. There is no recording of the exquisite Pastorale from the *Christmas Oratorio*, except in a poor transcription for the piano. (When this piece is done I trust it will blot out, once and for all, my recollection of the heavy-handed orchestral record made by Stokowski, and now mercifully withdrawn.) There is no recording of the whole of any of the church cantatas in our catalogues (and none of those issued abroad, that I have heard, were at all satisfactory), and considering that most of Bach’s greatest music is to be found in the one hundred and ninety-nine of these works that have come down to us, one wishes that at least one of the most representative of them should be recorded. I suggest *Wachtet auf* (the parable of the Wise Virgins), from which we have not even one of the several piano transcriptions of Bach’s wonderful treatment of the second verse; the solemn hieratic dance of the wise virgins as the watchers on the heights (the tenors of the chorus) proclaim the arrival of the Heavenly Bridegroom:

The situation in regard to Handel is even worse. A mere handful of airs from the operas and oratorios, and that is all—none of the beautiful Italian cantatas or the chamber duets and trios, ideally suited to recording. A well-edited recording of the superb oratorio *Saul*, or the delightful village idyll, *Susanna*, of *Acis and Galatea*, or *L’Allegro* would be a revelation to a generation that knows practically nothing of Handel. Why, at least, should we not be given some of the instrumental movements from the operas, such as the Minuet from *Ariadne*, as popular once in England as the “Intermezzo” from *Cavalleria Rusticana* is to-day?

I suppose it is foolish to complain about the gaps in the representation of chamber music (apart from “Society” issues) when the sales are so small, but there is urgent need for at least a few of the vintage period of Haydn’s string quartets, as well as a

recording of Mozart's C major string quintet, and some of Brahms's string quartets.

I have good reason to believe that some, at least, of these suggestions are being sympathetically considered and that many other gaps are to be filled in. In particular, one would welcome the Berlioz's *Requiem*, *L'Enfance du Christ*, and some of the *Romeo and Juliet* music; and a number of the recordings from the later operas of Richard Strauss. The little overture to *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Ariadne's great aria—one of Strauss's finest pieces—are long overdue. We need, also, a complete recording of Mozart's *The Elopement from the Seraglio*.

It is time that the Parlophone *Two Thousand Years of Music* and the Columbia *History of Music* were withdrawn in favour of better-considered schemes, recorded with the best forces available. A just amount of space should be given to such men as Giovanni Gabrielli, Monteverdi, Schütz, Victoria, our own Tudor composers, and so forth. The day may come when music-lovers will turn from the glamour of large orchestral sound to quieter pleasures, and that will be all to the good for music, as well as for the neighbours! When that day does come, I hope that the catalogues of the gramophone companies will be able to offer an abundance of that intimate "home-music" which gives more lasting enjoyment than any other.

MUSIC OF THE FILM

SCOTT GODDARD



THE filming of Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia* complete is an event that must be greeted with special attention. Note that the title is given here in its original. It is one of the signal marks of cultural independence in the production of this film that the opera is sung in Italian and, most surprising of all, the screen is kept free throughout from any hint of those running translations that disfigure more films than they help. This is indeed a compliment to us who watch and listen. What has brought about such a state of affairs? Is it that the producers have so cynical an outlook as to the average intelligence of the opera public that they deliberately disregard the admittedly feeble claims of those who go to hear not only music but words? Be that as it may, it is most restful to be free from those disturbing lines of verbal eruption across the base of shot after shot.

That is one point in this film's favour; another is the actual photography which, though some of the sets have the look of utility cardboard, is carried through neatly and efficiently. The camera, in fact, is used more subtly than the microphone, in that it follows the characters rapidly and elastically. This the microphone too often fails to do, so that it is difficult at times to discover from which mouth a given stream of sound is proceeding. Nor is the sound-track of even fair quality; there are too many moments when the voices sound like files or the boom of distant cannon. But the film, despite these disqualifications, succeeds in proving that opera can be treated with artistic honesty on the screen; for having established that much it deserves to go down in history as the precursor of what may be hoped to be better things. If reports are true, this filmed opera will be remembered as the last breathing-space before *Carnegie Hall* bursts upon us with the full force of unadulterated Celebrity Concert publicity.

This article, written the day before the private view, can meanwhile take into account a few other aspects of the art of musicalising films rather than filming music.

Rumer Godden's *Black Narcissus* has music by Brian Easdale. I own to having come away without a note of this music retained in my memory. Thinking this over, I was shocked at such an apparently non-curative attitude on my part; but then came to the conclusion that I had paid the music a compliment. For since it was quite clearly not antagonistic to the mood of the story (had it been I should have recalled it in recrimination), it evidently fulfilled the conditions required of music for a film, that it should support but not intrude. Yet I had come with the avowed intention of listening to the music of a man whose work I have followed for many years with interest and increased respect. What would have jarred would have been any sort of bastard "Indian" music, the kind of synthetic slime that leaves its sluggish mark across scores of "Eastern" evocations. Easdale's stay in India has had its effect; for manifestly the background to this film of the Himalayas is musically satisfactory, since it arouses no displeasing reactions in a listener who is himself aware, in some slight degree, of the implications involved.

Fortunately I saw *Black Narcissus* before experiencing real Indian music in another cinema; otherwise the music written for that European film on an Indian subject might have become entangled in my mind with the real thing as I heard it at the British Council one morning. There were, I seem to remember, six short documentaries, three to do with musical instruments, three with dancing techniques. The commentaries were the weakest part of the show, some of them abysmally conventional in turn of phrase. But not even that could take away from the interest of the films. The instruments, strange to Western eyes and their sounds equally bewildering to our ears; the dances of an incredible hieratic dignity and beauty, their movements as far beyond Western dance figures in subtlety (I think especially of arm, hand, and finger techniques) as the rhythm of the drumming is far advanced beyond anything the most admired of Western trap-drummers can do.

William Alwyn's *Courtenays of Curzon Street* well fulfils its job of providing period stuff and a general wash of acceptable background sound. But here again there is the same blemish as Auric's producer left in the Gide film *Symphonie Pastorale*. As at a crucial moment in the French film, so in the English film, music is forced into a false position, one where it positively harms. The early-Victorian mother, sitting in her boudoir before her dressing-table, has just received the hideous information from her beloved only son that he is going to marry the lady's maid and that nothing she can say will persuade him otherwise. We know full well the effect of this calamitous move upon her; for that we have been adequately prepared in the opening shots of the film. She sits for a moment speechless with horror. It is a moment too profoundly shocking for words; there are, in fact, no words. But instead of silence there intrudes the inevitable background wash of warm music and the effect fails, the little significant passage is ruined irretrievably. No wonder people long for a return to the silent film if this is the use to which music is put.

MUSIC OVER THE AIR

STANLEY BAYLISS



LIKE the policeman's, the radio-music critic's lot is not a happy one. Theoretically, he should have his ears and mind upon the loudspeaker almost twenty-four hours a day. But however much he may be inclined to do his duty by his readers, mundane things stand in his way. Thus I have to admit that I was unable to listen to a number of Hindemith works (which I was glad to see appearing in the programmes) and certain opera broadcasts, such as Glinka's *Ivan Susanin* and Smetana's *The Secret* and *Dalibor*. The imminence of press day, too, will prevent me dealing with a performance by the B.B.C. Choral Society of Holst's *Choral Symphony*, a week after the Royal Choral Society had revived it at the Albert Hall. But the B.B.C. have been so prodigal in things musical, that perhaps it is as well I am also circumscribed by space.

During the week in which his birthday fell, they did Shakespeare proud. Not only were we given a performance of *Richard II* by the Old Vic Company; a talk on *Macbeth* by John Dover Wilson, and examples of Shakespeare translated into Spanish (by Salvador de Madariaga), German (by Schlegel and Tieck), and French (by André Gide); we had, besides, music inspired by Shakespeare: notably Elgar's *Falstaff* and a Berlioz programme, both conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

Elgar's *Falstaff* remains a problem. Can it be appreciated without a knowledge of the elaborate "programme" that Elgar himself thought it was necessary to provide? It is difficult for one whose business it is to know such things to place himself in the position of a music-lover who might listen to this work without any previous study or preparation. The chances of war had prevented me hearing *Falstaff* for at least six years, and during that time I had had time to forget much detail of the significance of most of the

themes. The result was that I thoroughly enjoyed listening to it until the end of the second interlude which depicts Justice Shallow's orchard. From then on until the end of the work I got an impression of incoherence, although I must admit that Boulton gave the conclusion a greater sense of finality than Elgar himself used to secure in the performances I heard him conduct.

The Berlioz programme consisted of the *King Lear* overture, extracts from the *Romeo and Juliet* Symphony and *Beatrice and Benedict*, and the *Hamlet* Funeral March. To my mind the *King Lear* overture never once strikes the authentic tragic note. Of the *Romeo and Juliet* extracts, only the "Love Scene" appeared to be the work of a genius. The rest was rather common stuff.

But is Berlioz to become staple radio fare? Besides this Shakespearean programme, we had Sir Thomas Beecham's splendid performance of the *Messe des Morts*; and *La Prise de Troie* is also to be performed under his baton.

The surprise of the period under review has been Honegger's *Joan of Arc*. This setting of a text by Paul Claudel was written in 1935 and first performed at Basle in 1938 with Ida Rubinstein as Joan. In view of the success in England of Honegger's *King David*, it is strange that it has taken so long for this later work to reach us. Possibly its performance was delayed by the war. It proved to be extremely good radio. Indeed, it doesn't seem contrived for stage performance at all, and on the concert platform surely the sight of gentlemen in evening dress getting up to declaim the spoken dialogue would be destructive of all illusion. Over the air, the intrusion of speaking voices seemed quite natural. In the tenth scene, "May Song," the singing of the choir of Mary Datchelor Girls' School revealed a graciousness that one did not expect from the Honegger best known here, the Honegger of *Pacific 231* and *Rugby*.

Other French music included some Gounod songs sung by Janine Micheau and Geneviève Touraine, of whom I heard only the former. When I read Landormy's book on Gounod, I was surprised at the high valuation put by him upon these songs. Hearing them sung by such a singer as Janine Micheau, they certainly sound charming. How fresh she made the hackneyed

Sérénade appear! Well, they are not great songs in the sense that many by Schubert, Brahms, and Wolf are; nevertheless, *Vénise*, a setting of de Musset, would adorn any vocal recital programme.

One often makes a complaint against an artist only to find one has to eat one's words. I have often complained that Adolf Busch never plays any music later than Brahms, and to the best of my belief this still holds good if he is regarded as a soloist. But it was gratifying to hear his quartet broadcast a performance of Frank Bridge's Second String Quartet in G minor. The players seemed thoroughly at home in it, and it is doubtful whether any native quartet party has ever given the work such a polished performance. Certainly something one would like to have repeated!

The Busch players also made Good Friday memorable by their rendering of Haydn's *Seven Last Words on the Cross*. These meditations contain some of Haydn's greatest writing for the string quartet medium; even the naivety of the final depiction of the earthquake does not shatter entirely the magic wrought by his genius.

Handel-Mozart is familiar to us through the extra accompaniments to *Messiah*. Bach-Mozart is not so well known. First, Harold Darke played the Organ Trio Sonata No. 2 in C minor, and then Leonard Hirsch, Jean Stewart, and Harvey Phillips played the Largo and Fugue from it arranged for string trio by Mozart. Harriet Cohen followed with the Prelude and Fugue in F sharp minor from the second book of the "48." Mozart had transcribed the Fugue only of this work for string trio, writing an entirely original *Adagio* of his own to precede it. All the facts having been placed before him, the listener was able to form his own judgment. Orchestral transcriptions of Bach's organ works are often flashily vulgar, and transcriptions of his organ chorale preludes for piano often create awkward passages for the player that are a torment to the listener's ear. These transcriptions by Mozart, on the other hand, can only win our admiration. String tone gives an emotional intensity not always forthcoming when the works are played on keyboard instruments, whether organ, harpsichord, or piano.

With the resumption of full broadcasting, "Music Magazine" once more graces Sunday mornings. One issue included a talk on Brahms's songs by Elena Gerhardt, and among the records played was one of her singing *Der Schmied*, accompanied by Arthur Nikisch. It could not but make one regret that one had never heard Nikisch either as conductor or as accompanist. He took the song far slower than I have ever heard it before, but the effect was all the greater. Here the smith really was swinging his hammer.

Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G minor* was sung by the Huddersfield Glee and Madrigal Society under Leslie Woodgate. It is almost certain that no southern choir has ever sung this work as well as this Yorkshire body did: such *pianissimos* are a rarity down south. I have heard this Mass sung by such diverse bodies as the Oxford Bach Choir under Sir Hugh Allen and the St. Michael's (Cornhill) Singers under Harold Darke, and I have always been inclined to agree with Ernest Walker that it is far too bare a harking back to mediævalism. These Huddersfield singers put me on the way to revising my opinion.

Round about the same time another work of Vaughan Williams was broadcast that I find difficulty in accepting without qualification. This was the song-cycle, *On Wenlock Edge*, broadcast by René Soames (tenor), Ernest Lush (piano), and the Æolian String Quartet. The vocal line in its handling of English verbal rhythms could scarcely be bettered, but the accompaniment sounds so bare and full of parallelisms and onomatopœia, that one feels the result is most unsatisfactory. Yet what other settings of A. E. Housman's *Shropshire Lad* poems are as alive as these?

I was sorry not to be able to hear the record of Horowitz playing Czerny's *Variations on the aria, La Ricordanza*; I never expected Czerny to appear in a broadcast programme. You never can tell! Who would expect to hear a broadcast of anything by Sydney Smith, the Victorian salon composer and adornment of Star Folios? Yet, to my knowledge, that incredibility happened one morning during the war!

OPERA IN LONDON

STEPHEN WILLIAMS



THESE are trying times for the critic of opera. If he loves opera—and every critic worth his salt loves the art he criticises—he is torn between a merciless ideal of opera as he knows it should be done and a sentimental admiration of those who are doing opera as well as they can.

Sir George Dyson, at the annual lunch of the Critics' Circle, said that it was asking for bankruptcy to put on an unfamiliar opera, and he asked the critics to be more indulgent towards enterprise. One's heart goes out to enterprise; one's heart goes out to anyone who puts on opera at all in these days of austerity. On the other hand, there is a tremendous new public to-day eager to swallow any opera it can get hold of, and these people will assess the value of opera from what they now hear. One hardly needs to emphasise the grave responsibility of opera promoters towards young men and women whose first impressions may either endear opera to them for the rest of their lives or kill it for them for ever. That is why, in these times, criticism must be more vigilant and ruthless than it has ever been. To encourage bad art because of good intentions is to fall for the old plea that one must give a good notice to a poor artist because he is supporting his mother who is dying of consumption. It is better for his mother to die than for him to be allowed to give thousands of people false ideas about the most important things in life. Hard words; but I trust they break no bones.

I am glad to see, therefore, that the present operatic enterprises in London are getting their fair share of kicks as well as ha'pence. For instance, there was an astonishing—and stimulating—conflict of opinion on the New London Opera Company's production of *Rigoletto* at the Cambridge Theatre. Not in the Press—the Press, as a whole, was enthusiastic—but in the audience. It

was astonishing because seldom have I heard such polar extremes of opinion, such drastic division of one man's meat and another man's poison. There were no half-measures: the audience seemed to fall into two factions, one declaring that it was the best *Rigoletto* for generations, the other that it was just one colossal blunder. It was stimulating because such disagreement is always stimulating. If a work of art moves one either to ecstasy or anger it proves that that work of art is alive. Take the case of Berlioz: how savagely, fanatically abusive his critics and partisans become at the very mention of the name! Berlioz may have been a great composer or a great bungler; but the fact that people still come to blows about him proves that he was at least a great figure. Similarly, the Cambridge *Rigoletto* may have been a great production or a bad production, but the fierce argument about it proves that it was certainly a stimulating production.

I myself thought it every other inch a great production. One quality it certainly had; the right atmosphere of romantic splendour—mainly owing to Joseph Carl's décor and Frederick Dawson's costumes. The courtiers *looked* like courtiers and their singing suggested that the Court retained a music-master as well as a jester. The Duke's palace *looked* like a duke's palace and not the Bayswater second-floor front with which impoverished touring companies have made us familiar. The crooked, overhanging houses in the second scene and the menacing mists brooding over the river in the last were also finely imaginative. In just such a river would midnight murderers huddle the bodies of their victims!

Then there was Carl Ebert's production, constantly vivified by little master-touches of dramatic effect. For once Monterone (Bruce Boyce) was an august and awful figure, a monument of the wrath of God. In the second scene Sparafucile crouched in the shadows, as still as the stone he sat on, *waiting* for *Rigoletto*, a symbol of the doom already decreed and prepared for him. For *Rigoletto* is more than mere musical melodrama: it has an Æschylean fatalism, and in it we hear the ironic laughter of the gods.

Marko Rothmüller, the new *Rigoletto*, has a glowingly vital

sense of the theatre. "He's doing splendidly as Wotan!" said one of the opposing faction in the interval, and perhaps there was just a spark of truth in the gibe. The voice has a slightly Wagnerian "edge" to it and one occasionally missed the warmth and silken suavity of the true Italian style, especially in *pianissimo* passages, where the tone tended to become colourless. On the whole, however, a noble and intensely moving interpretation. The Duke (Antonio Salvarezza) was vigorous rather than stylish, and in quiet sections the high notes were a little too open. But the voice itself is glorious, and certain phrases suggest that if the promoters ever contemplate an *Otello* here is their man. By hard work and study Daria Bayan has improved tremendously. Her singing on the first night was, understandably, a shade over-careful, but her voice is enchantingly sweet and her Gilda was definitely a fresh, romantic young girl and not a mere *prima donna*. Martin Lawrence gave us a perfect Sparafucile—resonant, menacing, and overbearing, and with just the right touch of vulgar bravado.

There is no race like the British for trying to "pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon," especially on nights convulsed with thunder and lightning when the moon is not shining at all; and in the first half of the year the Covent Garden Trust, with characteristic temerity, added to its repertory three of the most elaborate and exacting operas ever written: *The Magic Flute*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and *Turandot*. Even when the times of peace were really piping and with the finest resources of the world to draw on, these works would tax one's ingenuity almost to breaking-point; as things are, it is a miracle that they have been successful at all. Oliver Messel did some noble and spacious designs for *The Magic Flute*; so spacious, indeed, that they tended to dwarf the personalities of the singers. Only Oscar Natzka as Sarastro had the voice and physique to live up to this effect of immense and enchanted distance—"a palace of foam and of opal, peace beyond peace to the eye." Audrey Bowman's Queen of the Night lacked the superhuman fire, but her voice bravely fulfilled Mozart's cruel demands and her high F's were real notes and not desperate squeaks. Victoria Sladen achieved some shapely phrasing as Pamina, and Kenneth Neate's Tamino was his best performance

of the season. Grahame Clifford's training in Gilbert and Sullivan enables him to make every word audible and telling, but he drew down on himself a lot of abuse for turning Papageno into an Irishman. Grossly unfair, for, as he explained to me rather plaintively on the first night, he was only obeying his producer's orders.

The production of *Der Rosenkavalier* made me very happy and very sad. It made me very happy because it was probably the most stylish and accomplished production Covent Garden had given us during the season. David Franklin, being a thoroughly decent Englishman, was quite incapable of the goatish brutality of Baron Ochs; but he sang the part with considerable grace and gallantry and, after all, it is something to have an English bass who can sing a low C and hold on to a high F for eight bars within a few minutes of each other. In acting we were richly compensated by Doris Doree as a gracious and most moving Marschallin and the courtly Octavian of Victoria Sladen. On the other hand, *Der Rosenkavalier* made me very sad because for the first time I was conscious of its ponderous defects. Was this the fault of the performance or the fact that I have grown less patient than when I first fell in love with it in youth? Impossible to say; but the fact remains that the jest seemed to go on far too long. "Too many notes," said Rachmaninoff, shaking his head forbiddingly, when I once mentioned to him his First Concerto. And that damning phrase kept ringing in my head that night at Covent Garden. As always, the end of the first act and the end of the last had a breath-taking beauty; but we had to wait a long time for them.

BALLET IN LONDON

ARNOLD HASKELL



THIS year, so far, has not seen any visitors from abroad, with the exception of Colonel de Basil's original Ballets Russes which is coming later in the season. Clearly, the position since the war has altered radically. Before 1939 when people talked of going to the ballet they invariably meant a foreign visiting company, now they mean Sadler's Wells. Formerly the public was prejudiced against the native article, while to-day it is the foreigner who must prove his worth. That is a very remarkable achievement, and one that is thoroughly deserved. The visitors that we have had here since the war have not, taken as a whole, been up to the standard we have set, though the Ballet de Champs-Élysées taught us a lesson in the use of décor, and the *Americana* of Ballet Theatre was a welcome novelty.

To-day the only two countries that can sustain a company throughout the year are Great Britain and the United States, so that any visitors that we may have must come to us either from the United States, or at any rate from a lengthy stay over there.

The craze for ballet in America started in 1933-34 with the visit of Colonel de Basil. His company was then at its strongest with Danilova, Massine, and the new-comers Toumanova, Baronova, Riabouchinska, Verchinina, and Lichine. It came as a revelation to a public that associated ballet with the music-hall or movie-house presentation. That astute impresario, Solomon Hurok, whose memoirs (*Impresario*, Macdonald) have been recently published, launched the ballet in the biggest possible manner, and sent it on its long inter-State travels to about a hundred cities a year, with all the "ballyhoo" of a three-ring circus. It is a moot point whether Hurok made or destroyed

ballet in America. It is certain that without his faith and very real enthusiasm it would never have taken a hold, but it is equally certain that high-pressure salesmanship destroyed the very delicate and essentially European Russian (émigré) ballet.

The popularity of ballet in America spread to the "musical," and to Hollywood. In this country our producers of musical comedy and revue, with the glorious exception of C. B. Cochran, have never made the most of the dancer. There is a strange form of dancing taught in many of our schools under the name of musical comedy, but of what this actually consists, apart from some rather vulgar movement, I have never really been able to understand. In America the serious choreographer was called upon to produce ballets that were interesting not only in themselves, but that were a part of the whole. There is at the moment an outstanding example of this in *Oklahoma* at Drury Lane. Balanchine, Agnes de Mille, Jerome Robbins, and others have all brought ballet to musical comedy. While this has benefited musical comedy, it has acted to the detriment of ballet. The salaries that Broadway and Hollywood can afford to pay are far in excess of those current in a repertory ballet company, or appear so to the dancer, since in a permanent ballet company the dancer enjoys a security not known in the casual engagement. The temptation of these large salaries has led to a disintegration of the various ballet companies, and nearly every dancer of note has at one time or another danced either in Hollywood or in a Broadway show.

Mr. Hurok has always based his policy on the star system and on what he advertises as "the biggest and best in Russian ballet." The result has been companies in which the leading rôles in the big cities are danced by guest artists who do not happen to be at the moment in some Broadway show. A company must be an organic whole, an instrument as sensitive as a great symphony orchestra, and the result of these star performances has brought enormous damage to this conception. Moreover, new companies are constantly forming around the personality of one or other of these stars. Last year Lucia Chase's Ballet Theatre broke away

from Hurok on this very point. The result has been a life-and-death struggle between the various companies, in which ballet has been the sufferer. A definite ballet slump has set in.

This state of affairs in America of necessity reflects upon the scene in England, making it doubtful as to what visiting companies we shall see in the near future. Two of the American stars, Nana Gollner and Paul Petroff, have been appearing in England as guest artists with the International Ballet. Unfortunately, ill health prevented Gollner from appearing at any but a very few performances of *Swan Lake*. Nana Gollner is a dancer of great distinction who will be remembered for her performances with the late René Blum's company in *Swan Lake* and *Les Elfes*. During her London season she was not seen to her greatest advantage and, like so many of the American dancers, she seems to have developed some of the mannerisms of Markova, who has set a standard over there in the interpretation of *Swan Lake*. There is no doubt, however, that she is an admirable dancer, and given the necessary discipline of a permanent company she would be one of the outstanding ballerinas of the day.

At many of the London performances her rôle was taken by Mona Inglesby, a dancer of very considerable technical achievement who is at present somewhat deficient in the ability to mime so difficult and sustained a rôle.

The Anglo-Polish Ballet made a reappearance in the West End at the Saville Theatre. This company is one of the most popular of all in the provinces and its performance is full of colour and vitality, though it lacks all the finer points that delight the connoisseur, and such ballets as *Les Sylphides* should have no place in its repertoire. It presented a new dancer in Loda Halama, and in the more vigorous types of national dancing she shows herself to great advantage.

The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet presented a revival of Andrée Howard's *La Fête Étrange*. This work, with outstanding décor and costumes by Sophie Fedorovitch, is danced to the music of Gabriel Fauré, music that does not lend itself well to orchestral treatment, and while there are many moments of great decorative beauty, the ballet is over-long and somewhat lacking in

climax. June Brae, one of the most musical of present-day dancers, carries the leading rôle with success.

These young dancers continue to improve, and in Anne Heaton, Nadia Moore, Sheila O'Reilly, and Donald Britton there is a quality that has become the hall-mark of our national ballet.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes there has been a move of great importance for the future. At Covent Garden Miss de Valois announced the enlarging of the Sadler's Wells School to include a full education for children from the age of ten. On the same occasion Leonide Massine stressed the great importance of such a school, and referred to his own school-days in Russia at the Imperial School of Ballet. The Sadler's Wells School will have its headquarters at a building in Colet Gardens that was originally designed as a school. This means that the future dancers in our ballet will have lived together in the same atmosphere for some eight or more years, before appearing on Covent Garden stage. Already eighty-five per cent of the dancers in both companies have been trained in the ballet school. With the new system many more pupils will have an opportunity and there will no longer be a conflict between the demands of a vocational training and a sound general education.

This is the very antithesis of the star system. Miss de Valois has always believed in a systematic planning for the future. At the same time it is of great importance that we in this country should see as much ballet from abroad as possible. It would be fatally easy to settle into a smug state of self-satisfaction.

CONCERTS IN LONDON

GEORGE DANNATT



A CYCLE of concerts which presents within a few weeks the whole of a composer's creations in one field of his art is of great interest and importance, an attractive event for practically every class of concert-goer and of utmost value to the student. Individual concerts of such a series can provide great enjoyment for the desultory listener, just as a book picked up and read at random can satisfy the spasmodic reader, whilst from attending every concert of a series the more serious listener will derive something of the same satisfaction and sense of "completeness" that the constant and avid reader must surely experience upon concluding the twelfth and last volume of Proust.

In a previous issue of this Magazine I mentioned some complete performances of Beethoven's String Quartets, and since then the London audience has again been able to hear the whole of this always impressive cycle. The interpreters were the Busch Quartet, who gave the sixteen quartets in six concerts at Chelsea Town Hall over a period of twelve days. Not having had the opportunity of hearing the series, I am unable to criticise the performances; but as I have frequently commented with some asperity on the paucity of audiences at events of great musical importance, it was good to learn that these concerts were exceedingly well attended. Apparently, then, there is still an audience for concerts in this hall provided that the music is established and that the players are considered to be of international standing. But our London audiences remain an enigma; a large audience was readily available for these concerts, whereas only a handful ventured to the Boyd Neel Orchestra's series in the same building, a series with intrepid and widely varied programmes which included representative works of composers ranging from Bach, Telemann, and Purcell to Bartók, Honegger, and Schönberg. Ensembles such

as those directed by Boyd Neel, Alan Bush, Kathleen Riddick, and Kathleen Merritt regularly include in their programmes a fair amount of interesting contemporary music. At the Wigmore Hall a series of ten programmes of great vitality sponsored by Gerald Cooper generally attracted only a tiny audience. Alma Mahler's recent *Memoirs* of her husband form an ill-balanced book, but some of the letters are most revealing. One letter (from Amsterdam in 1904) gives some indication of the composer's delight at finding his Fourth Symphony included twice in the same concert. . . . "After the interval, it starts at the beginning again! I'm really anxious to know whether the audience will be warmer the second time." Each of the Gerald Cooper concerts included the first performance of a new work, and frequently the new work received its second performance at the same concert, a sound and praiseworthy idea; but owing to the sparseness of the audience there was little possibility of its becoming warmer at the second performance!

In this series Elizabeth Maconchy's *Sonnet Sequence*, a setting of two Kenneth Gee sonnets for soprano and string orchestra, beautifully sung by Joan Cross (total audience fifty), proved a skilful and vigorous work, although at times it seemed to suffer from a divergence of styles. The work showed the influence of Mahler, Bartók, and, I think, Britten; there is no reason why influences should not be discernible and they were never marked enough to disturb a very sympathetic setting. Sonnet form is not readily set to music and one felt that Maconchy was unwise to choose it, although it may be that because her style tends to be terse and angular the difficulties to be encountered attracted her. It was certainly a very much more lyrical work than any of her previous economical and ingenious conceptions. Among other works which received a first and second performance was Patrick Hadley's setting for contralto and string quartet of Sydney Dobell's poem *The Orphan's Song*. Unaffectedly affected, lyrical, and of a beautiful and mature workmanship, it alternately intrigued and bored, delighted and infuriated me with the sugar-sweetness of all its twenty-eight verses. For so many emotions to have been aroused in so short a space of time I suspect there is

considerably more in the work than a first hearing (yes, I fled after the first) was able to disclose. The Zorian String Quartet accompanied to perfection Astra Desmond's not wholly satisfactory interpretation.

It is evident that this type of concert which includes a modicum of contemporary music is frequently neglected, and that the very opposite holds good when the programme is one of established music, even in the realm of the more specialised chamber-music audience. One cannot help wondering what the reactions would have been of those who now feel able to accept the established, but eschew the contemporary, had they encountered a hundred years ago the music of Beethoven's Third period, music which an average chamber-music audience now assimilates without any sign of disturbance to its mental digestion; but the ability to perceive what is a great work at the time when it appears is given to few; witness Weber's pronouncement that the four octave "pedal point" at the end of the first movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony confirmed his opinion that the latter was fit for the madhouse!

Year after year the Promenade Concerts provide an opportunity for hearing Beethoven's symphonies in their entirety. Although this cyclic presentation has wisely been extended to include the complete symphonies of Sibelius and Vaughan Williams, it is the persistent inclusion of Beethoven's which is so important, but for the London public by no means sufficient. For this reason alone the performance of the symphonies in five weekly all-Beethoven concerts (without the unavoidable distractions of the Proms) is a very acceptable move. Such a series was in fact presented by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under their popular guest conductor, Victor de Sabata.

"Music ought to create and fan the fire of the spirit of man" wrote Beethoven, and put this belief into practice throughout the whole of his life by the creation of music of unsurpassed beauty and grandeur. Although he, as any true creative artist should, acknowledged his indebtedness to the older masters, his symphonies are, after all, the very bedrock of the European symphonic thought which followed him, so that one can well under-

stand the contemporary opinion which greeted Brahms's First Symphony as "Beethoven's Tenth." How Beethoven struggled to put his revolutionary ideas on to paper has been depicted and preserved for us by the evidence and publication of the *Note-books*, particularly those containing the *Eroica* and the Fifth. It would be safe to say that the absence of his symphonic form and inventiveness would have had the same effect on musicians and music that the non-existence of Saint Paul's teaching would have had for Christians and organised Christianity. Without Beethoven the main stream of music might have remained purer (which, I imagine, is what Britten meant when he wrote that "the rot commenced with Beethoven"), just as, for the Tolstoyan or the more progressive nonconformist Christians, Christ's teaching would have remained simpler and purer without that great organiser.

We are here considering the performance of these symphonies by one of our chief orchestras under an Italian conductor, but whoever the performers are it is, I think, of paramount importance to keep in mind the status of the composer. The conductor, in considering his performance, must be aware of all the hundred-and-one subtleties and demands which the composer has made and, if he be a good conductor, seek to convey these with all the erudition which is his to command. De Sabata is apt to put himself before the music, and one therefore expected to find that in his Beethoven concerts he would continue to do this. With Beethoven, however, he discards his gesticulatory showmanship and gives straightforward and generally accurate performances, sometimes interpreting with tremendous vigour and understanding, but sometimes too with a disappointing dullness. His performance of the First, Third, Fifth, and Eighth were ordinary average everyday performances, and even then his *Eroica* lacked depth. On the other hand, his Sixth and Seventh (as heard at this particular concert) were, without exception, of the very finest quality. Weingartner, Koussevitzky and Toscanini have all interpreted these symphonies on records and in London concert-halls, but I have never heard better than here the breath-taking beauty of Beethoven's pastoral scene nor the grandeur of

his "aufgeknöpft" (but always controlled) emotions in the Seventh; Toscanini made the village players in the "Pastoral" play with the precision of a German military band, but Sabata gave them the simple ingenuousness and "out of tuneness" which I feel certain Beethoven wanted when he portrayed that breezy bassoonist. Performances of the Seventh are frequently uninspired, and the concert-goer should have been extremely grateful for the beautiful and emphatic performance which Sabata gave; even in this performance the last movement seemed to me a piece of sustained vulgarity, the type of Beethoven music which can disturb the listener in the same way that the composer's fits of rough boisterousness apparently offended his more sensitive friends. Those who were fascinated by Sabata's performance of these two symphonies and who went to hear his interpretation of the Ninth must have found that it could not have been worse. The grandeur of the first movement was lost amidst any amount of ragged playing, the timing and rhythm of the second movement were tampered with, the third movement was distinctive only for bad orchestral playing, and the choral movement was chaotic. If the acclamation of the audience were to be accepted as the only evidence of the success of these concerts, one could safely say that the series had met with phenomenal results; there is, however, the evidence of the well-attuned ear and of the eye on the score to contradict and act as a far less hysterical assessor. There was some remarkable playing by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in this series and if they are encouraged to repeat their laudable venture they must not be persuaded to employ the same conductor, anyhow for all the symphonies. As an orchestra they tend to over-emphasise their virtuosity and would (like their brother-players in the London Symphony Orchestra) greatly benefit from a permanent director. If they could obtain the services of a permanent trainer-conductor such as Alceo Galliera, who in my opinion is the finest new conductor we have had in London since the war, there is no doubt that their general standard of playing would improve.

One should be able to direct a visitor in London to an orchestral concert knowing from experience that the standard of the playing

he was to hear could not fall below a certain level, and a pretty high one at that. The concert audience, with its much greater sensibility than the more gullible theatre and film audiences, must increasingly demand a high standard of performance and a bold planning of programmes. This is of particular importance in London, which so easily may become the artistic centre of Europe, as indeed the tendency was in 1939.

NORTHERN DIARY



SCOTLAND : MAURICE LINDSAY

THESE pleasant summer weeks usually give the Scottish music critic his five months' holiday, for formerly few events of any significance took place between May and September. But this year things are different. The Scottish Orchestra, instead of disbanding at the close of its winter season, is merely enjoying a vacation prior to reappearing at the beginning of June for its first summer season. The summer season will end early in August, when the orchestra will begin to rehearse for the Edinburgh Festival. For the first time in its history, therefore, the Scottish Orchestra comes near to achieving permanency. This, on the face of it, seems a very healthy sign. But, unfortunately, all is not well by any means. The Managing Committee has made it plain that the forthcoming summer season is in the nature of an experiment, and one which can succeed only if the people of Scotland give it their wholehearted support.

Inability to agree amongst ourselves is an unhappy Scottish characteristic, which has manifested itself again and again in our politics and our religion. It now threatens this first attempt to establish the Scottish Orchestra on a permanent basis. Edinburgh, persisting in her day-dream of possessing her own symphony orchestra, seems unlikely to give the summer season any civic support. At this stage it is impossible to foresee what will happen, but obviously a guarantee from the Edinburgh authorities would make the success of the season more probable. If a heavy financial loss is incurred, then, without a doubt, all hopes of a permanent Scottish Orchestra must recede into the far-distant future.

Edinburgh's attitude would perhaps not be quite so galling if one could see any prospect of the mooted Edinburgh symphony orchestra ever materialising. The Scottish Orchestra's concerts in the capital were certainly well supported last winter, but, with

one exception, concerts by visiting artists and by local musical bodies were badly let down. The London Philharmonic played in a poorly filled Usher Hall. The Zorian Quartet—performing, amongst other things, Britten's Second String Quartet—had an audience which could almost have been counted on one's fingers and toes, and the Bach Society's performance of the Mass in B minor was given to nearly unbroken rows of empty seats. Not even the "popular" celebrity concerts were filled to anything like capacity. To a Glaswegian, accustomed to packed halls, this does not seem to augur well for a permanent Edinburgh orchestra.

It is therefore distressing to find Scotland's leading music critic, Stewart Deas, adopting a parochial, village-pump attitude to Scotland's music-making as a whole, and championing the proposed Edinburgh orchestra at the expense of the "Scottish." He has even gone so far as to suggest the founding of an Edinburgh Academy of Music, although it would seem far more desirable to raise the standards of the present Royal Scottish National Academy of Music in Glasgow before setting up another one. Until such times as a benevolent Scottish Government with its seat in Edinburgh sees fit to establish truly national musical institutions in its capital city, and subsidises them with a generous grant, Scotland's artistic organisations must draw their main sustenance from the largest agglomeration of the population, Glasgow.

The Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra under Eduard Beinum gave a concert in Edinburgh, playing a hackneyed programme of classics which included Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*. The London Philharmonic gave two concerts, offering an all-Beethoven programme under Victor de Sabata, and yet another hackneyed programme with a preponderance of Tchaikovsky under Jean Martinon. The Dutch orchestra's superb technique and detailed artistry proved to be such that one forgave them their programme. The L.P.O., however, cannot get off so lightly. Mr. de Sabata took liberties with Beethoven which the critic of *The Scotsman* rightly censured. This led to some heated controversy in the correspondence columns of the paper. Mr. Martinon's performance the following night, though care-

fully thought out, was not outstanding enough to justify the routine programme. It is high time foreign artists and orchestras realised that we in Scotland resent Tchaikovsky-saturated programmes, which no discriminating London audience would tolerate for a moment!

Two new works by Scottish composers have had their first radio performances within the last few weeks—Ian Whyte's Symphony No. 1, and Cedric Thorpe Davie's cantata, *The Trumpeter of Fyvie*. The Whyte symphony proved to be an interesting one-movement work with plenty of novel scoring, especially for the brass. To some extent it lacked formal cohesion, but it is nevertheless one of the most original symphonies to come from the pen of a Scottish composer, and it gives high hopes for Mr. Whyte's future essays in symphonic form. *The Trumpeter of Fyvie* is the dramatised story of an old ballad related in song and Scots dialogue. It is scored for orchestra, soprano, and tenor. Some of the actors occasionally speak through music. The words are by Robert Kemp, one of the leading younger Scottish dramatists. Mr. Davie's music is often imaginative, here and there very moving, but at times a little diffuse. The cantata takes an hour to perform, so naturally the music is on a small scale. *The Trumpeter of Fyvie* left me with the firm impression that Mr. Davie and Mr. Kemp between them could produce a Scottish opera of significance. McCunn's *Jeanie Deans* was successfully revived in Edinburgh just before the recent world war, about the time of the Glasgow production of W. B. Moonie's *The Weird of Colbar*. Ian Whyte has an as yet unstaged opera, *Comala*, awaiting performance. The Glasgow Grand Opera Society, who have revived such works as *Idomeneo* and *The Trojans* in the past, would be well advised to tackle a Scottish opera rather than invite comparison with the professional companies, as they did this year with very indifferent performances of "Cav. and Pag."!

The only outstanding recitals to be recorded are the two given in May by Joan Alexander. She sang works by Wolf and E. J. Moeran and Ravel's arrangements of five Greek folk-songs with a musical understanding as rare as the lovely quality of her voice. She is now easily the finest *lieder*-singing soprano in Scotland,

and I have heard very few to equal her in England or anywhere else.

LIVERPOOL: A. K. HOLLAND

The winter season closed with echoes of "the crisis" still ringing in our ears, and with dire forebodings of the economies that will need to be exercised next season. In point of fact, however, concert attendances began to show some signs of resilience by the beginning of April, and when the Philharmonic Society launched its Beethoven "Festival" (that is, six concerts at weekly intervals) in the middle of the month, the returns seem to have surprised everyone, though they were not quite back to pre-crisis levels.

The answer of the Philharmonic to this financial stringency was to intensify the campaign for further grants-in-aid, and the society succeeded in persuading the Birkenhead Education Committee to come into line with Liverpool by making a contribution of nearly £2,000 towards the provision of concerts for the schools. At the moment of writing the accounts for the year have not been presented nor is it known to what extent the Corporation will respond to the demand for still further grants, but it is clear that the most successful line of approach has been through the educational scheme, and such concerts, both in the halls and in the schools themselves with sectional orchestras, have proved the most attractive bait.

The Beethoven "Festival," even if it did not exactly set the Mersey on fire, proved to have some points of interest. All the nine symphonies were given, four of the concertos (including the violin) and a half-dozen of the larger overtures. The only work that was not all too familiar was the second *Leonora* overture. Three of the concerts fell to Malcolm Sargent and the remainder to Boult, Jorda, and Groves. Jorda has made such an excellent impression this season in such things as Debussy's *La Mer* that his Beethoven was comparatively disappointing. But if the festival had one virtue more than another, it was that it caused the orchestra to look afresh at some of the more hackneyed things in its repertoire.

And, touching repertoire, no one can seriously complain of the range and variety of orchestral music that is played in Liverpool, though its frequency is apt to produce, in those of us who are condemned to hear it all, some feeling of satiety. People with a weakness for statistics may like to know that the most frequently played of modern composers (with a steep decline in the ratio, however) are Sibelius, Debussy, Falla, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Dohnanyi, with Bartók, Ravel, Mahler, and Shostakovich, following in a more or less level bunch, among foreigners; while, among the natives, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Delius, Walton, Britten, Moeran, Holst, Bax, and Bliss occur, in that order. But to what extent this is due to the recurrence of two or three favourite works it would take too long to explain. Even among some of those allegedly overplayed works, such as Beethoven's Fifth and the Tchaikovsky concerto, it is remarked that they do actually occur a mere matter of three or four times a season.

The piano concerto is still the predominant solo interest, but during the latter part of the season covered by this review the outstanding performances were, curiously enough, not those of pianists. They were, in fact, the Bartók violin concerto (Max Rostal), the Britten violin concerto (Thomas Matthews), the Bloch viola suite (Paul Cropper), the Ibert flute concerto (Arthur Gleghorn), with the revised version of the Vaughan Williams concerto for two pianos (Cyril Smith and Phyllis Sellick) gaining a *succès d'estime*. But these, unfortunately, are not the things that the box-office loves, and we still have to cope with a public which will flock to hear its beloved Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, and Schumann, and fight shy of the rarer sensations.

There have been a few small signs of a revival of interest in choral music. Apart from the plethora of *Messiahs* which occasionally draws a mild protest or two from the satiated public (three in one season by a single society, and so forth), there has been a certain liveliness among the smaller bodies which have presented, among other things, Bach's *St. John Passion* (Wallasey Singers) and Martin Shaw's *The Redeemer*. But Lent aroused the Number One choirs to nothing more novel than Handel. Earlier we had in one week both *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* of

Elgar, though, alas, in the wrong order. Fortunately, the standard of choral singing, after a somewhat prolonged depression during the war, seems once again to be on the up-grade.

Right to the end of the 1946-47 season we were without any serious opera, and hope is just being kept alive by the promise of an autumn visit from the Covent Garden company. A few gallant amateurs occasionally throw off one of the stock pieces, with an execrable orchestra, but even in this sphere Liverpool is not what it was. As for chamber music, this is still an appallingly weak spot. Our oldest society, the Rodewald, struggles gallantly and seemed at its last concert to have hit the nail on the head when it admitted as "guests" a large body of members from the prosperous Philharmonic Club. This club, incidentally, apart from a few lectures and demonstrations, can now manage to run its own occasional "closed" orchestral concert. Another field that is being assiduously tilled is the concerts for members of industrial and commercial firms. These had so much success that the scheme is to be extended next season.

MANCHESTER : J. H. ELLIOT

Musical Manchester, as a whole, has for decades been in hot water with some of its younger musicians because of its attitude to contemporary music. Well, let's face it, we have been a little cautious and conservative for many a long year; and oft-times, full-panoplied and perhaps a little too conscious of the virtue of my mission, I have taken up my lance and charged into the lists as the champion of the modernists (though I might as well have ridden, Don-like, at a windmill). I had better confess at once that time has blunted my weapons and frayed the edges of the banners under which I battled. Perhaps this is merely a question of hardening arteries; but I prefer to think that experience has taught me that the issues are not quite so simple and clear-cut as they once seemed. Still, I look with an indulgent eye on any young knight who takes up the challenge. To the idealist, expediency is a weak and wicked word, and I find it heartening enough to see some generous spirit, full of enthusiasm, laying about him on behalf of

a forlorn cause regardless of all practical considerations. Manchester was thus castigated when it failed to fill our biggish Opera House for a week for Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*, though it was at the height of a holiday period and just before a three-weeks' season of Fausts and Rigolettos and things. The 1946-47 Hallé programmes came under the lash, although, as I ventured to point out at the time, they were far better than we had any right to expect having regard to the economic conditions under which the Society was working.

Still, it is good for us to be stirred up from time to time on the subject of modern music. Our record is none too good. For instance, there was that dreadful episode in the nineteen-thirties, under the Harty régime, when the Hallé Executive in mid-season issued a statement to the effect that subsequent programmes would be amended, "the earlier part of the season having proved that a policy of including a large number of unfamiliar works was not appreciated by the majority of the subscribers." The exclusions thus portentously announced were not, as one might suppose, thorny specimens of Bartók, Stravinsky, or Schönberg; they were, *inter alia*, Debussy's *La Mer*, a Dance Rhapsody of Delius, and (of all things on earth) a symphony of Bruckner! What hope, then, had we of hearing advanced modern music, if this was a reflection—as one must presume it was—of our city's attitude to the so-called "unfamiliar"? True, we had occasional concerts by a group of enthusiasts who ran the Contemporary Music Centre; but they were not generously supported, and I seem to remember that the programmes sometimes offered sops to Cerberus in the shape of chamber works by Reger and others who could not either literally or by courtesy be described as contemporaneous. The state of affairs was, in short, pretty grim.

Well, times have changed. There is a vast new public for music, here as elsewhere—a public which, by turning a few knobs at the right moment (and, to the credit of the B.B.C., such moments are not infrequent), can hear excellent performances of unfamiliar music, old and new. Modernism presumably has few terrors for the new listeners; and perhaps they are luckier than many of us older stagers, for the "contemporary music" of our days of new-

ness was often so consciously in revolt against tradition that its impact made one see stars. It was the sort of thing that Michael and Fleur used to hear in the later episodes of the *Forsythe Saga*. Music has settled down considerably since the silly 'twenties; much of its rubbish has gone to the ash-cans, and those of the old iconoclasts who are still in practice have learned, like Shaw's *Black Girl* in a wider sphere of life, that there is more to it all than smashing idols with a knobkerry. We have, then, a considerable body of concert-goers who no doubt could "take it" without flinching. But here is the irony of the situation: the very conditions which helped to create the new public—a colossal and destructive war—have sent us all into an economic flat spin. Now, at the moment of writing, I know nothing of the plans for 1947-48, Hallé or non-Hallé, but if the general policy of the city's musical societies still avoids modern music I shall accept it quite calmly. How can our concert-givers be expected to take heavy risks? Besides, there are signs—in a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, perhaps, but clear enough—that there may be a slump, though let us hope not a disastrous one.

Again, are we sure that even our new public, as a whole, really wants modern music in any considerable quantity? Well, I don't know. We had a plebiscite orchestral programme some time ago—the result of a Hallé Club poll. Was the chosen symphony by Rubbra, Walton, Shostakovich, or who-all? It was not. It was Dvořák's *New World*—nor was there any sign of the "brave" new world in the rest of the programme. Perhaps this proves little, and certainly we must not bring it forward as conclusive evidence. Still, there it was, and I venture to think that in any case the lead will have to come from the performers—or, rather, the musical directors—for it is after all largely a matter of habit. If concert-goers are given a regular dose of modernism, even in the face of the most vigorous resistance, opposition will wear down and die away and a custom will have been established. But this won't be until our music-making is financially independent, or until there is a strong and decisive agitation for modern music by our public. In the meantime, there is always the Third Programme.

BIRMINGHAM: J. F. WATERHOUSE

Any view of Birmingham music last season must be dominated by Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, sung by the City Choir in April. The choir had set itself a new high standard earlier in the season, albeit on very familiar territory, with a fine brace of centenary *Elijahs* and with a brace of customary Christmas *Messiahs* which, though butchered with the usual cuts and plastered with the usual added accompaniments, were far above the common run. But to tackle the Mass in D was another matter. It had not been given in Birmingham since 1923, and inevitably one viewed in advance its arduous and treacherous course with some anxiety. Yet I do not think it can have had very many better performances in the hundred and twenty-three of its life. Under the direction of Dr. G. D. Cunningham, the mountains of Gloria and Credo were ascended without threat of disaster, and the pitch, power, tone, and enunciation of the soprano part bore striking testimony to the health of Birmingham's womanhood. The whole thing was an overwhelming experience; and the only regret—a bitter one—was that twin performances had not been arranged as with the previous stock works. Apparently fear of financial disaster stood in the way.

And apparently fear of financial disaster still chillingly haunts the programme policy of the City of Birmingham Orchestra. I spoke peevishly of programmes in my first bulletin from Birmingham—perhaps too peevishly. I cannot pretend to have stopped feeling peevish. Yet, judging by the dismal indications in *The Times'* advertisements, we at least come out well in comparison with the succession of big orchestral concerts in London. We are not a racket, whatever we are. One thing that emerges with steadily greater clarity is the brilliance and loyalty of Mr. Weldon and the orchestra in their dealings with Elgar. All his mature orchestral works (except *In the South*, which will doubtless follow soon) are now established in the regular repertory: both Symphonies, both Concertos, *Falstaff*, and, of course, *Enigma*. The performances are magnificent, and Birmingham Town Hall may nowadays not unreasonably be reckoned the Elgarian centre of

England. One cannot but feel a baffled dismay, though without the slightest antagonism towards another great orchestra, that a clash of dates was not circumvented in the arrangements for the Elgar Festival at Malvern in July.

Walton's Symphony and Vaughan Williams's Fifth are now firmly on the twice-a-year list. Moeran's Symphony and Rubbra's Third Symphony have reappeared. Indeed, aided by a big majority of Elgar, British music of the past fifty years secured a quarter of the total entries on the March-April programme card. Apart from Sibelius, and, if you count him, early Strauss, modern foreign works are still rare. I happen to know (while swearing my own complete innocence in the matter) of an attempt by a group of the discontented to "frame" a plebiscite programme by sending in an organised system of postcards, judiciously varied but including common factors. One of these factors was Bartók's string *Divertimento*. The plot did not succeed. But, rather oddly, the same composer's Concerto for Orchestra appeared on the list of results, second favourite among the miscellaneous orchestral works. Very possibly this may have been the result of another plot unknown to me (the number of the discontented appears to be so large that one would have thought they could all get together and guarantee an audience for some more adventurous concerts), but in any case the vote was disregarded and Bartók is still a stranger to our programmes.

However, peevishness seems to be rising again and (as this article is meant to be favourable) must be suppressed, along with the tissue of arguments around its cause and any murmuring about Haydn's or Schumann's symphonies. That the standard of performance in all departments has reached a very high level, there can be no questioning at all. I have not had much opportunity of hearing other British orchestras at work during the past year, but I would willingly risk a bet on the Birmingham strings for a "place" in any organised contest. There are only forty-one of them—a small company by present reckonings; but the need to assert themselves may well be in part responsible for the fine resinous grip and bite and attack which is among their most notable qualities. No doubt a day will come soon when they are

augmented, and we are blanketed in velvet, but it may not be in all respects a gain. Wood-wind and horns have developed a fine security of ensemble, with excellent solo-work throughout. A tendency on Mr. Weldon's part, which at one time looked very alarming, to urge brass and percussion towards a rowdy, catch-penny sensationalism singularly at odds with the very refined artistry of the players themselves, is clearly and fortunately on the decline. In all respects Mr. Weldon's own artistry matures and improves. He is a splendid conductor.

A recent series of Sunday all-Beethoven concerts, with all the symphonies, was clearly welcomed by all sections of the audience. There were outstanding performances of the Third, Fourth, and Seventh (this last with Walter Süsskind as guest conductor), and of the Second Piano Concerto with Tom Bromley as soloist.

Space only allows selection this time of two other events: the excellent example set by the Birmingham Choral Union, under Appleby Matthews, in presenting *Messiah* uncut and with an essay towards the original accompaniments, which was none the less an excellent example, although the singing fell somewhat below this choir's improving standard and the accompaniments were not all successfully planned; and *Dido and Æneas*, by the energetic Clarion Singers, which had a few blemishes but was vastly commendable. The policy of this society seems to be to revive each of their productions some months later. Their *Beggar's Opera* and *Peasant Cantata* reappeared much improved, and *Dido* started at a much higher level than either. Professor J. A. Westrup descended from Oxford to conduct.

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